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Are You Better Off Than You Were In 1980?

FASCISTS AND DECONSTRUCTIONISTS • THE NEW DALE CARNEGIE • THE GREAT MORGAN BANK HEIST

MY WICKED
PASSION FOR
BOB DOLE
HENDRIK
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Al Gore for President



John Loughlin '88

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To the editors:

Andrew Sullivan is either ill-informed or deliberately misleading in "Who's Killing Haiti?" (February 1). He got one thing right: "Abrams . . . threatened on July 9 to cut off U.S. aid if there was a 'perversion of the democratic process.'" I did make that point clear, and when the electoral process went off the tracks on November 29, we did just that: we terminated all military and non-humanitarian assistance to Haiti. Yet he can't keep his facts straight: we cut \$75 million in aid, not \$100 million; we did not withhold "some \$50 million in IMF money," nor do we have the power to do so.

Mr. Sullivan asserts that "thanks to U.S. aid, the number of Haitian military troops jumped from 6,500 in 1986 to 22,000 today." A little fact-checking would have shown that the Haitian military numbers about 7,500, up perhaps by 500 since the departure of Jean-Claude Duvalier. Our military aid to Haiti since Duvalier's departure two years ago has totaled less than \$4.0 million.

Mr. Sullivan states, "At no point in this litany of atrocities was there a clear, high-level denunciation in Washington of the Haitian army's involvement and its growing complicity in the breakdown of law and order." Perhaps he missed Secretary Shultz's August 7 statement: "Let me say first that we are very concerned by the violence that is occurring in Haiti. We have strongly protested the misuse of force by the security forces against unarmed civilians."

ELLIOTT ABRAMS

*Assistant Secretary of State
for Inter-American Affairs
Washington, D.C.*

Andrew Sullivan replies:

The 22,000 troops figure was from Americas Watch, the most reliable and thorough monitor of the pre-election period. They now believe it is too high for uniformed troops, but about right for the total force of the army and the Tontons Macoute, who acted in tandem November 29. The point remains that U.S. military aid, training, and failure to insist on disarming the Tontons Macoute (a mere 3,800

weapons were confiscated) strengthened Namphy's forces before the election. My \$100 million figure for lost U.S. aid was widely quoted at the time, but does miss the timing of some of the many programs involved. The real cut—the difference in aid to Haiti between fiscal '87 and '88—is now reckoned at \$68.4 million. The IMF loan was suspended because the end of the U.S. economic support fund wrecked Haiti's credit rating. And as to Mr. Shultz's August 7 statement, the State Department has no record of it, nor does it show up in a Nexis scan of major publications for that week. Maybe he said it to Mr. Abrams over breakfast. Wherever he said it, it hardly amounts to public pressure on Namphy.

REAGAN'S TRUE COLOR

To the editors:

Fred Barnes errs in seeing a principled appeal to civil rights as being at odds with the president's conservative base of support ("Color Up," January 25). Recall these words of the president in a 1983

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Cathleen Black, Publisher, USA TODAY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 7, 1988

OUR CHOICE

"A world ends when its metaphor has died," a poem by Archibald MacLeish tells us. But the spent metaphors of American politics—especially the most hopeful ones: the "New Deal," the "New Frontier"—do not give way easily. They still seem to resonate, out of habit if nothing else, even as their promise has dimmed. One generation's achievements do not spare the next generation its own trials.

It is a true measure of the American predicament that our politics has not produced a different theme, at once realistic and compelling, around which Democrats might build a public agenda. The Republicans still preach greed and mourn the end of the "American century," another epiphenomenal metaphor. Meanwhile they try to distract attention from the decline of American power with a succession of diverting sallies which are no substitute for a foreign policy drawing its strength from a sound economy and based on carefully nurtured alliances with other democracies. Unhappily, the Democrats generally seem to have no stomach at all for international affairs or for defense. That is one reason their visions of the country's greatness often seem so disembodied, as if the United States could live alone and just for itself in this world, a feckless midlife yuppie among the nations.

In simpler times, a president or presidential candidate could use facile phrases like "New Deal" and "New Frontier" to evoke both an obvious need and a plausible program in response. In Franklin Roosevelt's day the American people, in Arthur Schlesinger's words, "threw off a sick conviction of defeat and began to believe in themselves again." In retrospect, at least, the requirements were clear: social arrangements had to be contrived to bring the

great masses of capitalism's disinherited into the family, in order for capitalism itself to function again. The country also had to assimilate the descendants of the mass immigrations, and the New Deal achieved just that.

John Kennedy confronted nothing so grim. But the torpor of eight years of Eisenhower had left the impression, in Schlesinger's words again, "of an old nation of old men, weary, played out, fearful of ideas, change, and the future." This was an opportunity for someone "young, brave, civilized, rational . . . exultant in the excitement and potentiality of history." It is chastening to be reminded that only one generation ago it was no conceit to think that America still had frontiers we could cross—virtually unchallenged, and certainly without racing against Japanese, German, and Korean competitors.

In 1988, after nearly eight years of Ronald Reagan, there is again the impression "of an old nation of old men" and, worse still, of a country burdened by debt and riven according to a carefully calibrated calculus of regional conflict, class antagonism, and racial enmity. The challenge certainly is there, but the confidence it takes even to name that challenge honestly is scarce.

That is why this campaign seems less a reprise of past Democratic campaigns than a parody of them. To invoke either the mood or the measures of the New Deal and the New Frontier, as the candidates of 1988 so often seem inclined to do, is to mistake incantation for remedy. The winners of the first contests—Richard Gephardt in Iowa, Michael Dukakis in New Hampshire—have not in their rhetoric these many months acknowledged the world as it really is. Woe to the Democratic Party if it allows those

two idiosyncratic and pampered jurisdictions to circumscribe the nation's choice.

To his crude populism of unwarranted grievance and unwarranted resentments, Richard Gephardt has grafted on a xenophobia so ugly and so deluding that it reminds us of the disastrous "America First" movement during the late 1930s. Bashing allies, however wayward they may sometimes behave, and blaming them for our own failures, is not a program for America. The only consolation we can find in Gephardt's reckless agenda is that he has flip-flopped so often on so many issues that you can't predict today whether what he said yesterday has any connection to what he might say tomorrow. Gephardt may not really be xenophobic; maybe he's just using xenophobia as a marketing tool for himself. What a price he must pay in the sinews of his identity. And what cold comfort for us.

Michael Dukakis's failings are not those of excessive

flexibility. To be sure, he has been an acceptable governor for Massachusetts, perhaps even a bit better than that. But what seems cerebral in his temperament is, in fact, merely rigid. This rigidity derives from no great passion for ideas, no deep convictions about issues. It derives from Dukakis's overweening estimate of himself: if Michael Dukakis has come to believe something, this suffices as evidence of the rightness of the belief. No arguments, please. The language is technocratic and neutral, a politics without painful decisions about values elevated and values diminished. As in other ways reminiscent of Jimmy Carter, however, the engineer of policy options somehow garbs his engineering in the vestments of high-minded ethics. This doubling effect, swinging between moralism and micro-management, is no easy trick.

The "Massachusetts miracle"—the phrase itself suggests Dukakis's lordly powers—is really a regional phe-

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This
Week

Last
Week Weeks
on Chart

1. WE'LL FILE YOUR RÉSUMÉ ✓ * 5

Bush. Watching Bush's New Hampshire campaign was like watching a highway accident: horrible but mesmerizing. His public persona devolved until he had no persona. But in political theatrics, as in all drama, character is established in conflict. Bush is a Republican reaction shot. If you cut away from Reagan, Bush looks the faithful sidekick. If you cut from the acerbic Dole, Bush looks benign.

2. THE ODD COUPLET ✓ * 2

Jackson. Fate is being good to Jesse Jackson. A wave of racial trouble has warmed liberal guilt, while foreign causes with which he's associated—the Sandinistas and the PLO—are momentarily ascendant. His campaign has been mainstream and unthreatening; the real possibility of endorsement by a rival white candidate will increase his apparent credibility. With the South upcoming, Jackson's march toward Atlanta has Shermanesque qualities.

3. I AND THOU ✓ — 1

Resentment. Robertson's and Gephardt's early strength has been attributed to a politics of resentment. This is an Iowa bounce too, but of commentary; the Midwest has long been home to a resentful populism. Gephardt's is the campaign to watch. His appeal thrives in a culture losing its footing and looking for others to blame for it.

4. SHIP OF TOOLS ✓ 5 6

Palestinians. The Palestinian attempt to launch an *Exodus*-like ship of return is inspired p.r. Savvy Palestinians have long sought to co-opt Israel's defining symbols, as in references to a Palestinian Diaspora. That Israel is currently on the wrong side of the David and Goliath analogy is bad enough. That it is also being recast as Otto Pre-minger's British colonial martinets may be worse.

5. VALSE TRISTE ✓ * 2

Waldheim. Waldheim's desperate efforts to defend himself against his own government's report suggest a man unable to grasp the reality of his predicament. With Austria's chancellor threatening to resign over governmental paralysis, and a weary public call-

ing for an end to the national psychodrama, the Waldheim story is ending on a Lear-like note.

6. ICE FOLLIES ✓ — 1

Winter Olympics. Two familiar themes dominate the Calgary coverage: 1) The amateurism is a fraud; the better athletes aim for lucrative endorsements. 2) The U.S. isn't too good at winter sports. This doesn't reflect national inability so much as it does the total stick-and-ball orientation of the U.S. sports press. Sports without status draw few participants.

7. WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA? ✓ — 1

Stanford. The debate over Stanford's required reading list is yet another sign of the culture's intellectual stratification. While there is common ground that ideas are important, there is none on which ideas these are, who expressed them, or even the role of the Western tradition. Scrutiny is a healthy Western notion, but intellectual revanchism is often the forerunner of social strain.

8. STARRED AND BARRED ✓ — 1

Confederate flag. The Confederate flag controversies are less trivial than they may seem. Like the courthouse Johnny Reb statues, the flags are among the last fossils of the long-lived culture of glorious defeat that dominated Southern life and literature well into the 20th century. When the flag is furled, its symbolism for whites will at last have been drained.

9. KIDS' STUFF ✓ — 1

Children's leisure. Something is happening to American childhood, at least as it's been exploited for a generation. Toymakers are in turmoil; they cannot find a breakthrough product. Kidvid producers are similarly at sea. Kids are no longer watching the cartoon action shows so long dominant. Both industries have turned to the past: old-fashioned toys and live-action shows.

10. BAD RAP ✓ — 1

Rap music. The rise of rap music as an advertising tool to reach middle-class whites is a true curiosity. The real rap subculture remains an often profane expression of urban black machismo (pace Beastie Boys). This middlebrow application seems neither a trivialization nor a subversion of rap's threatening values; it just seems oblivious of them. Maybe the football team rap videos have sanitized the form.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

nomenon. New Hampshire, run on reactionary Republican economic principles for years, has one-third less unemployment than Massachusetts. The Bay State boom is mainly attributable to the presence of M.I.T. and Harvard, and to the enormous defense expenditures out of Washington (expenditures Dukakis has been among the loudest to criticize). It has little to do with the man who is pleased to be known as the Duke of the realm.

Furthermore, the so-called miracle has not exempted Massachusetts from more than its share of the homeless; from city public school systems so degraded that the middle class increasingly resorts to expensive private education for its children; from a system of higher education not much better; from major highway arteries clogged at dawn and still clogged past dusk.

As it happens, we also don't believe Dukakis electable. Moreover, he is so humorless that the fight wouldn't be fun.

WE SUPPORT Al Gore for president in 1988. We support him for the Democratic nomination, and we support him against any likely or imaginable Republican opponent in November. We do so not only because of the shortcomings of his rivals, ample though they are. We endorse him because of his own qualities.

The most immediately striking of these qualities is a complexity of mind that sets Gore apart from all the other candidates of both parties. Evident in all the debates, his intellectual powers were especially apparent in more rigorous forums such as Marvin Kalb's in-depth interview on PBS and two of David Brinkley's Sunday morning programs on ABC. It is actually a pleasure to hear Gore speak. The pleasure derives from the refreshing sight of a politician actually wrestling with nettlesome issues rather than simply plugging in a cassette, and doing so in language that is neither impoverished nor monotonous.

A president whose spontaneous speech is both vivid and allusive might by himself do more than a dozen educational reforms to inspire the young toward a richer relationship with the English language. It would be no small thing. And since, for Gore, language is an instrument of a disciplined intelligence, the character of our entire public discourse would be enhanced. We have a rule at TNR that we don't print articles by politicians unless we're sure they've done their own writing. We've been sure about Gore, and we've been challenged by what he's written.

Gore has the courage to tell the citizenry that ours is a problem culture, and will continue to be one. The republic of virtue will not arrive the very day a Democrat re-enters the White House. To concede to the fact of our sustained difficulties is not to submit to their tyranny. Rather it is to emancipate us from shibboleths and the expensive yet ineffective government programs that derive from them. It is also to understand the need for more radical remedies.

If a plain-speaking politician such as Al Gore can save us from costly taboos and illusions and point us elsewhere, that is no small blessing.

Also alone among the 1988 candidates, Gore seems to

have a grasp of what our future economy needs to look like if we are to turn the illusive prosperity of huge personal and collective debt into a prosperity rooted in the production of useful things and services. Gore has a near-legendary ability to grasp the meaning of new and adventurous technologies. No one in our elected public life has thought more deeply and more seriously, and with a more contagious curiosity, about the ways in which fiber optics, biotechnology, and superconductivity can regenerate a tired economy—and open unthought-of possibilities for human life and the human spirit.

Listen carefully to Gore on this exhilarating and liberating theme as the presidential campaign finally goes national in the coming weeks and months. He is not a tinkerer with details. Sophisticated but ultimately cheap technologies like fiber optics are the key to integrating those areas of our country that have been excluded from the modern American economy, and transforming the entire system of production into a vibrant science-based one. It is true that the Japanese and others are also on the threshold. But that is just another reason we cannot afford a president who can't see it because it's not in his ken.

That won't be said of Al Gore, who has made the sciences of the next century his special concern. He has been ridiculed, even in these pages, for his scientific interests—as if they were remote and unconnected. They are not. His fixation—we shall be frank: that's almost what it is—on the disappearing ozone layer, toxic wastes, and other threats to the environment may seem diversionary. But it will seem diversionary only until it's become too late.

FORTUNATELY, almost no one thinks that concern about arms control is a diversion (and those who do are Republicans). Here, too, Gore's mastery has made him an influential leader among his peers in the Congress. No one doubts his comprehension of nuclear doctrine and no one who has heard him can doubt the depth of his commitment to a less dangerous world. Certainly the Russian politicians, strategists, and scientists whom he has met have been impressed with both; that much we know from the Russians themselves.

But Gore is allergic to the quick fix. He has insisted that arms reduction is only a plus for mankind when it is not destabilizing—that is to say, when it doesn't give either of the big powers even the slightest encouragement to try a first strike. This is Gore's standard, and it demonstrates the difference between a politics derived from intellectual and ethical scruples, and simple pandering.

The same difference is reflected in Gore's record on other defense and foreign policy matters. It is one reason so many of those who hoped that Bill Bradley would run this year are altogether satisfied with Gore. Both Senator Gore and Senator Bradley are known as tribunes of a foreign policy built around a strong defense and the careful nurturing of America's alliances. At the same time, both are repelled by the empty flag-waving that has been the mark of the current administration. They both know what the Reaganites have never understood: that if you tell people

they need only pursue private interests at home, they won't undertake obligations for their country abroad.

It used to be a cliché that privileges entail obligations. It is no longer a cliché, though it is not yet a heresy. It is at the core of Al Gore's character. The point is not, as Doonesbury seems to think, that Gore believes he was born to govern. The point is that he wants to serve. In that sense, he is quite old-fashioned. He thinks of America as one people and not as atomized individuals. And to the extent that we are not one people, it ought to be the goal of political life to bind us together—not just out of compassion for the excluded, but for our sense of ourselves.

Writing about the homeless in these pages a few weeks ago, Charles Krauthammer observed that the human suffering we allow on our streets has "made moral insensitivity a requirement of daily living." It will be hard for the nation to restore the communal ethos that has eroded so badly in recent years. We will need a president who doesn't see the interests of the poor as separate from the interests of the rest of us—someone who sees the government as an agency of integral and reciprocal obligations, not as an institution of charity.

ONE OF THE most indicative but overlooked political events of this remarkable election year was the unique two-tier endorsement by the Democratic Conference, an association of black elected officials based in Alabama. The officials' first choice, they said, is Jesse Jackson. Their second choice is Al Gore. Elsewhere, even in Jackson's own state of South Carolina, Gore is the first choice of top black politicians. All this is a tribute to an authentic strain of southern liberalism which Al Gore and his father, former senator Albert Gore Sr., exemplify. But it is also a symbolic recognition of the kind of vision of America that black public servants believe could engage the national energy needed to complete the civil rights revolution.

These black endorsements of Gore have immense political significance. They suggest the possibility of reviving the old Democratic coalition behind a new and wider agenda. A coalition of whites and blacks for Gore would be the first truly racially harmonious Democratic presidential effort since 1964. It would be a coalition not only of interests but of values.

Living on the front line of America's cultural wars, many black parents are acutely alert to the erosion of discipline and simple decency among the young, a process that belittles their own strivings and robs their children of aspiration and hope. Most white parents, particularly among the affluent, assume that their children are safe, and statistically they are probably right. But this is an unaffordable calculation for families that have always been fighting against long odds. These black families see Al Gore—and also his wife, Tipper—much as many white working-class families do: as public figures who are concerned about the real travails of raising children in an unstable society where the norms for living are set by corporations no more sensitive than those that poison our lakes.

It is sometimes said that Gore is a regional candidate. But

everyone hails from a region. Would Gephardt have won Iowa were he not from Missouri, next door? Would Dukakis have ever gotten 43,000 votes in New Hampshire if he had been the governor of, say, Oregon? Still, there is something special about the South. And it's not only that Democrats can't win without winning the South. The great historian C. Vann Woodward, in his stirring essay, "The Irony of Southern History," argued that the South, with its own memories of separation and defeat, may be able to show the rest of the country a moderate path to reconciliation and progress. Certainly the relationship of the races has achieved greater harmony in the South than in the cities of the North. Al Gore is a man of the South, conscious of its history, aware of its sins, deliberate about its virtues. Who better than a reflective and articulate Southerner can speak about Union to and for a cynical and psychologically dismantled nation?

Al Gore is our first choice because we are confident about his capacity to lead and lead wisely. We are for him for the long haul, through 1988 and beyond.

NOFZIGER'S COMPLAINT

The Ethics in Government Act, intended to restrict influence-peddling, is awfully hard to break. You really have to *try* to avoid its many loopholes, exceptions, and qualifications. Former White House aide Lynn Nofziger is the first person since the law was enacted in 1978 to try and succeed, or at least the first to be convicted of doing so. (Mike Deaver was nailed for perjury.) Yet Nofziger and his apologists in and around the Reagan administration seem to feel that law's very porousness—the fact that it is hard to break—somehow excuses behavior brazen enough to actually break it. "It's a lousy law," Nofziger opined on the courthouse steps after his conviction. "It's like running a stop sign."

It's certainly true that the ethics law's technicalities dull the edge of moral outrage. How much more nefarious is it to lean on a former colleague on behalf of a paying client 366 days after leaving office than 364 days afterward? Why is it worse to lobby an agency on something that is of "direct and substantial interest" to it (a key issue in the Nofziger case) than on something that is peripheral to the agency but vital to your client? What great ethical value turns on whether the National Security Council is or is not the same "agency" as the White House West Wing staff? Why—to take the apologists' favorite rhetorical point—is it perfectly OK for a congressman to lobby his successor the day after leaving office while White House aides are hemmed in with all sorts of meddlesome restrictions?

But drawing arbitrary lines is necessary to the art of lawmaking. This doesn't make the laws morally illegitimate. There is nothing magical about 65 mph that makes driving 66 inherently immoral and driving 64 inherently moral. But it is wrong to drive dangerously fast, and an arbitrary speed limit is the only sensible

way to enforce this desirable norm.

The lines drawn by the Ethics in Government Act are especially arbitrary. That's a result of the grudging way it came about. It would be easy enough to write a clearer, tougher law forbidding former government officers to sell their connections. At the behest of the Washington influence-peddling industry (and those who, in 1978, thought they might some day join it), this was not done. In fact, a couple of the more egregious loopholes were placed in the law by amendment a year *after* it was enacted. Now world-weary Washington sophisticates argue that the very existence of all these loopholes invalidates the law. Catch-22.

A final point ought to be obvious but apparently is not: a law is a law, even if you think it's "lousy" or unfair. We agree with the grumpy Republicans that the Ethics in Government Act ought to apply to members of Congress and their staffs as well as to the executive branch. We support legislation currently before Congress to do just that. But that doesn't excuse violations of the law as it is now written. It's a lot worse to break a law than to break what THE NEW REPUBLIC thinks ought to be a law. Lynn Nofziger knew what he had to do to avoid breaking the Ethics in Government Act. It wasn't very onerous. But apparently he didn't care.

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR GAYS

The constitutional analysis of last month's California federal appeals court decision invalidating the army's ban on homosexuals is impeccable. All the factors that have led the Supreme Court to protect other groups, such as aliens and ethnic minorities, under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment apply equally or more so to gays. They face widespread discrimination in society, discrimination that bears no relation to their ability to contribute. They are frequent victims of prejudice and inaccurate stereotyping.

Their condition, if not immutable, is certainly difficult to change. (The court asks heterosexuals to imagine trying to become gay.) In any event, sexual preference is "so central to a person's identity that it would be abhorrent for government to penalize a person for refusing to change [it]." The invention of a pill to change skin pigment, the court notes, would not suddenly make racial discrimination constitutional.

Homosexuals are a classic "discrete and insular minority," in a famous phrase, who cannot count on the democratic branches of government to protect their rights. All this, the court reasoned soundly, makes sexual preference a "suspect classification" under the 14th Amendment. Government policies that turn on suspect classifications can't survive unless they advance a "compelling government interest." What government interest was served by throwing Sgt. Perry Watkins out of the army? By the army's own account, he was a model soldier from his enlistment in 1969

until he was discharged in 1981. He made no secret of being gay, yet caused no trouble for anyone else on that account.

The army offered reasons it would prefer not to have gays in its service (a hopeless aspiration in any event). Not all the army's reasons are trivial: morale and discipline problems in the ranks, recruiting problems in the outside world. Yet all these concerns, however genuine (and we think they're at least exaggerated), derive from the existence of anti-gay prejudice in society at large. Clearly a constitutional protection shouldn't be eviscerated by the very prejudice it is intended to protect against. Proof of widespread racial prejudice wouldn't justify racial segregation in the army, let alone the barring of blacks. None of the army's concerns add up to a "compelling government interest."

The logic is so overwhelming that it was shared by the dissenting judge, Stephen Reinhardt. Reinhardt's only objection was that the ruling seemed to conflict with a Supreme Court decision two years ago upholding a conviction for homosexual sodomy. But that decision concerned the constitutional right of privacy under the Fourth and Fifth Amendments in the Bill of Rights. The Watkins case concerned the constitutional right to "equal protection of the laws" under the post-Civil War 14th Amendment.

The distinction between being a homosexual (this case) and practicing homosexuality (the earlier case) may be a mighty thin one. But, as the majority opinion by Judge William Norris points out, the army regulation at issue turns on exactly this distinction. Getting caught at a homosexual act is not grounds for discharge if you can convince the army that it was an aberration and you're not really gay. By contrast there was no evidence in the record that Watkins actually practiced sodomy. It's the being, not the doing, that the army objects to.

Nevertheless it is peculiar, to say the least, to conclude that there is a constitutional right to be free of discrimination as a homosexual (the holding of this case), but no constitutional right to practice homosexuality (the Supreme Court ruling of two years ago). That is why Judge Reinhardt, even as he argued that the Supreme Court ruling stayed his hand, declared that this ruling would someday be regarded like *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Court's 1896 case upholding segregation, and ultimately would "be overruled by a wiser and more enlightened Court."

We hope he's right. As we've pointed out before, the Georgia sodomy law the Supreme Court upheld two years ago banned all forms of unconventional intercourse, with no specific reference to homosexuals. The Court specifically left open the question whether the law was constitutional as applied to heterosexuals. But this leaves the Court in what seems to us a ludicrous position. Either it must hold that there are no constitutional limits on the government's power to interfere with your sex life, even in the privacy of your own home. Or it must explain why higher constitutional values are at stake in a heterosexual blow job than in a homosexual one. This very challenge will arise if the Watkins case reaches the Supreme Court. Good luck, your honors. □

NOTEBOOK

□ TRUTH IN ENDORSING: Just to stave off the conflict-of-interest fetishists, we herewith declare that Senator Al Gore is a friend of several editors of this journal and a former student of the editor-in-chief. We don't claim these factors had nothing to do with our endorsement. Quite the contrary: we have had the opportunity to observe, evaluate, and admire Al Gore's attributes over many years.

□ BYE-BYE BRUCE: Of the candidates who have been eliminated from the presidential race by Iowa and New Hampshire, a special word, and a special thanks, are due to Governor Bruce Babbitt. His courageous campaign on the theme of fiscal honesty forced all the candidates to be somewhat more honest than they wished to be, including the candidate we endorse this week. Babbitt is a man of wisdom, humor, and charm. That charm, unfortunately, was slow to communicate itself to anyone outside the press corps that got to know him personally. We hope Babbitt's party, and his country, will find a way to put his talents to productive use, now that he no longer needs to waste them campaigning.

□ JOG HOME, AMERICA:

McGovern for Pritikin.

"I first became involved with the Pritikin Longevity Center people some 17 years ago when I was chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs.

"Since my involvement is strictly personal. I've been through the Program several times. It brought down my cholesterol levels, helped me lose weight (a few pills, but let me tell you, I don't like to take pills).

"I've just an engagement with Gary Pritikin, now age 73 years old, when I discovered that the Pritikin method of nutrition closely matched my beliefs. Combining Pritikin and modern medicine is the American profile.

"I'd say it's a perfect program for a lifetime of good health.

"And I'm ready to tell that."

Longevity, Pritikin Center.

"Since 1970, the Pritikin Longevity Center has helped over 40,000 people reach a healthy new way of life.

"The results began right away. Average weight loss is 35 to 40 pounds. Cholesterol is reduced an average of 25%. Over 90% of adult-onset diabetes cases resolve themselves. And 95% of hypertension gradually medication free.

"All today do not rest, more about Pritikin's 12- and 28-day programs. Pritikin is located in a beautiful resort in the Pennsylvania Adirondack country. Call 1-800-364-9222. Bring a companion for free! Call today.

Pritikin Longevity Center

Longevity, Pritikin Center.

"I have lost weight, lowered cholesterol, and more."

—*New York Times*, February 14 (in the travel section, right next to Mickey Rooney for the Tabas Resort).

CAMPAIGN '88

DOLE'S CHARM

Nashua, New Hampshire

In the theater of American politics in 1988 Bob Dole is the mask of comedy and tragedy. A doubleness runs through him and all his works, and it begins with his body. From the back of a big hall Dole's injury is unobtrusive. One's attention is captured instead by his tall silhouette, pivoting from side to side, and by his flat, cutting voice. In television interviews one most often sees only a sharp-featured face

atop broad shoulders. But up close and in person, without a mediating camera to choose what shall be seen and not seen, one can contemplate at leisure the wound, still raw after 43 years, that has marked him in body and spirit. Dole's left side is buoyant and energetic. His left arm is in constant motion, arcing and slicing with hand flat, pumping and punching with fist clenched. His right side, as if in silent reproach to all that hopeful animation, is still and crabbed. The right arm is crooked at waist level and noticeably shorter than the left, the right hand smaller, darker, wrinkled, and always twisted around the ever-present pen he clutches to warn off any unwelcome touch.

With Dole, metaphors of duality are inescapable. His physical doubleness is more than matched by doubleness of heart and mind. But Dole's is not the serene dualism of a harmonic yin and yang; it is more like the positive and negative poles of some infernal electric machine, and part of what makes him so obsessively interesting to watch is that one never knows when the spark will snap and crackle, leaving behind a strong whiff of ozone. The spark may take the form of acrimony or of humor; the shock may be painful or it may be pleasant, but it is always there. The tension in Dole is not between anything so banal as unhappiness and happiness. Rather it is between an almost unfathomable bitterness, on (literally) the one hand, and a kind of rough wisdom touched by compassion, on the other.

On New Hampshire primary night Dole showed the grimacing half of his mask. In Iowa he had come from behind to beat George Bush (with some help from Pat Robertson). Here in New Hampshire the polls had shown him going from a 2 to 1 deficit against Bush two weeks before the voting to dead even two days before. But in "the only poll that counts" he got 42,878 votes, or 29 percent, against Bush's 56,393, or 38 percent. Appearing before his supporters at the Merrimack Hilton, Dole introduced a kid who had stood for him in a fourth-grade mock election, and then added bleakly: "The only difference is, he won." But the real shocker came later, when Tom Brokaw brought the two front-runners together electronically, Bush in NBC's Manchester studio and Dole on a monitor, and asked Dole if he had any message for the vice president. Dole's answer was a five-word snarl: "Stop lying about my record."

The Republican result here was a disappointment to the traveling press corps, which had collectively settled upon a story line for New Hampshire to which only a Dole triumph over Bush could have provided a satisfying climax. The story line was the humiliation of Bush-the-wimp, and the press pursued it with gusto. The vice president provided plenty of help. He engaged in wan regular-guy gestures, such as steering an 18-wheeler slowly around a truck-stop parking lot (with Secret Service men perched on the running board). He made a pathetic plea for votes, at the end of Saturday evening's televised debate, on grounds of his inability to express himself ("I don't talk much, but I do believe. I may not articulate much, but I feel"). And he repeatedly made a faintly off-color defense of the environmental benefits of the Alaska pipeline ("There are more darn caribou rubbing up against

that pipeline and having babies").

By contrast, Dole got a mostly free ride. But if the story line of the moment had been something less favorable to him, then the press's obvious liking for Dole would have given him less protection. Consider his behavior at a Friday appearance at the University of New Hampshire. During the question period, a neatly dressed young man stepped to the microphone and began, "I'd like to ask a question about South Africa, which hasn't been a forefront issue in this campaign but will definitely be a problem for the next president—" "Aren't there any conservative students here?" Dole interrupted. "Gotta be one or two. Good to see you," he added as a few students waved. The audience laughed. "Senator Dole—" the questioner continued, but Dole interrupted again: "I'd like to see some future taxpayers." That cut the laughter short, and it turned to boos. If the press's story line that week had been different—if it had been, say, the comeuppance of Dole-the-meanie—that little tiff might have made the news as the day's sound bite, perhaps accompanied by a pointed reminder of Spiro Agnew's attacks on "campus bums."

LIKE A puff adder, Dole emits jets of venom when poked. Yet he is enormously seductive, not only to reporters but also to a great many Democrats. I have heard more Democrats than I can count say that Dole is the only Republican who might tempt them to stray, especially if their own party nominates someone they dislike or are indifferent to. Some say they like Dole because he is funny, others because he is cynical, others because he is a practical man impatient with ideology. Yet this uncanny appeal of Dole's surely goes deeper than these pat formulae suggest, and it is somehow rooted in the complicated layerings of doubleness in the man.

Start with his humor. Nothing quite like it, so far as I know, has ever been seen before in American politics. It is not of the folksy, reassuring, yarn-spinning, countrified variety, nor is it the urbane wit of the cosmopolitan sophisticate; and it has nothing whatever to do with the packaged, professionally supplied jokes on which other candidates rely. Dole's humor is bleak, savage, often deeply subversive. It has less in common with Lincoln's or Will Rogers's or Adlai Stevenson's than with Lenny Bruce's.

Dole knows essentially nothing about popular culture. He cannot remember the last movie he saw. He reads newsmagazines for relaxation. It happens that the most energetic part of American popular culture right now is comedy. Bob Dole has probably never heard of Andy Kaufman or David Letterman, yet his humor shows every sign of coming out of a similarly modernist, minimalist, almost dadaist, sensibility. God only knows how this happened, but there it is.

An example. In Iowa Dole said that when President Reagan needed something done he called Dole, not Bush. Bush shot back that when Reagan wanted someone to take his place should something happen he called Bush, not Dole. Apprised of this sally, Dole asked, "Did he call collect?"

Another example. In the Iowa debate sponsored by the

Des Moines Register, Jack Kemp asked Dole why he's for an oil import fee. Dole answered seriously, explaining that he hadn't been an advocate of such a fee but would support it under certain conditions, as a means to price stability and energy independence, and that a five-dollar-per-barrel fee, for example, would raise about five billion dollars. Then he added, totally deadpan: "You'd have to rebate probably most of that to those who use heating oil in New England, particularly in those early states like New Hampshire."

One more. Last week, at the Peterborough Town Hall in New Hampshire, he told how he had challenged the local Republican chairman to "give me one good reason" Dole should join his party. "'I'll give you the best reason I know of,'" came the reply. "'There are twice as many Republicans in this county as Democrats.'" So I made a great philosophical judgment right there on the spot."

All this is pure Dole: laconic, acerbic, dry as a bleached skull on a Kansas plain. The "call collect" line skewers Reagan as doddering and out of it, ridicules Bush as choking on a silver spoon, and throws in a bit of dada blindsiding for good measure. The "early states" line sounds cynical, but since the effect is to sandblast away the cant in an otherwise conscientious answer, the result is actually less cynicism, not more. On the surface the line is "self-deprecating" (that holy grail of political joke writers), but it is at least equally aimed at his opponents, who, Dole subtly suggests, offer the cant without the antidote. (Dole's humor is never without political purpose.) Moreover, the line is subversive to the whole enterprise in which they all are engaged; Dole aims his shafts at the grotesqueries of politics, just as Letterman aims his at television's. The "philosophical judgment" line is similarly subversive. Dole's jokes and comic asides are part of his doubleness, a continuous running commentary on himself, his rivals, his trade, and whatever the ostensible subject of his remarks happens to be.

THE "PHILOSOPHICAL JUDGMENT" line begins to get at one of the reasons so many Democrats like Dole: they suspect he doesn't believe a lot of what he says. (Unfortunately for Dole in New Hampshire, there are apparently conservative Republicans who share that suspicion.) This does not come across only in his humor. He often sends double messages. Certainly he did so in a foreign policy speech to the New Hampshire legislature a week before the primary. It was studded with right-wing crowd-pleasers such as calling Russia a godless Communist state and quoting Jeane Kirkpatrick on those who always blame America first.

And on the red-meat issue of aid to the *contras* Dole made all the right noises, blasting "liberal Democrats" for "throwing in the towel on freedom" and showing "naive faith in a Marxist dictator like Daniel Ortega." But he was careful to define the threat not as "Daniel Ortega's army" but rather as "Soviet bases and intelligence facilities and advisers." I heard him go further over the next few days. At the University of New Hampshire he excoriated the Sandinistas and then said, "I would question that form of gov-

ernment. Does that give me the right to say we're gonna topple it? No. But if there's some legitimate group that's fighting for their freedom I might want to get Congress to go along with offering assistance." At the Derryfield School he said, "We're not afraid of Ortega. We're not afraid of the Sandinista army. They're no threat to us. But now they're talking about increasing the army and bringing in sophisticated Soviet weapons. If we ask the American people, 'Do you want another Soviet base in this hemisphere?', they'd say no. We haven't articulated our policy very well."

One can discern in all this the outlines of support for a deal whereby the Soviets would forgo bases and withdraw advisers in exchange for an end to U.S. support for the *contras*—exactly the deal Gorbachev has reportedly been offering, and the administration rejecting, for months. I like to think that Dole is simply too intelligent and too realistic to think much of the current policy of keeping a nasty, inconclusive war going and hoping for the best. He offers rhetorical red meat to the faithful, but for a true Doleologist like me his real intentions are there to see, cryptic but decipherable. To me this looks like ruthless shrewdness in the service of ultimately reasonable policy. To someone else, of course, it might look like duplicity.

Dole misses no chance to refer to himself as a conservative, and his conservative credentials date back a long way. Like Reagan, he was a charter supporter of Barry Goldwater in 1964. He was always a slashing partisan, and he is one of the few prominent Republicans who still uses "Democrat" as an adjective. But ideology is foreign to him, and to the extent that partisan loyalties have given way to ideological ones, Dole is a far less divisive figure than he used to be. When he touts his leadership abilities, he mentions two examples: working with Patrick Moynihan and Tip O'Neill to rescue Social Security in 1981, and defying the Reagan Justice Department to get the Voting Rights Act renewed in 1982. His record, on the whole, remains that of a hidebound Reaganite. But judging from what he says, and the feeling with which he says it, that is not the side of himself he values.

Dole is never more laconic than when he talks about the wound that felled him in the Po Valley in 1945, paralyzed him from the neck down for a year, put him in the hospital for 39 months, and left him reluctant to this day to look in the mirror. He does not speak of himself as a hero and in fact (unlike Bush) he was not a hero, merely a kid who "got shot." The experience made him, he says, "a bitter young man." Of course, he always adds, it also made him more sensitive to the handicapped and to unfortunates in general. Still, it is remarkable in this age of empty optimism that he dares to use a word like bitter about himself, even in the past tense. At some level he remains bitter, and his defeat here will do nothing to gentle him. The Republican contest is about to get ugly; the temptation to go hard right will be strong. It will be interesting to see if Bob Dole can resist it, and still be president.

HENDRIK HERTZBERG

CAMPAIGN '88

THE MAN TO BEAT

Manchester, New Hampshire

Richard Gephardt is no hero to the press. Two days before the New Hampshire primary on February 16, columnist Mike Barnicle of the *Boston Globe* wrote of him, "If he thought dressing up like a vegetable would help him win, [he'd] appear as a head of lettuce." A few days earlier, Jonathan Yardley, the book critic of the *Washington Post*, said he checked out a copy of *The Candidate* from his video store "only minutes after watching Gephardt's cynical attempt to manipulate the emotions of voters in Iowa." The main character of that 1972 movie is an idealistic but ambitious Senate candidate who becomes putty in the hands of his political handlers. The fellow, wrote Yardley, "is of a piece with Richard Gephardt . . . all image, no substance." The *Des Moines Register* called him "the most disappointing [candidate] of the field."

The other Democratic presidential campaigns view Gephardt even less charitably. A joke told by staffers for Bruce Babbitt goes like this: Why are Gephardt's eyebrows so light? He's a quart low on bullshit. Terry Michael, the press secretary for Paul Simon, says that after a year and a half of full-time campaigning by Gephardt, "people wonder what he really believes in, what his values are." A strategist for another Democratic candidate is more emphatic. "Gephardt has no convictions at all," he says. "He'll do anything and say anything to get a vote. He epitomizes the dark side of politics."

Gephardt's opponents, particularly Simon, complain bitterly about the methodical way he's changed positions—on abortion, minimum wage, the MX missile, medical cost containment, Social Security cost-of-living increases. But what truly offends them is Gephardt's incongruous populist spiel, incongruous because it conflicts with his status as an influential figure in Washington. And what infuriates them all the more is that the spiel works.

It won the Iowa caucuses for Gephardt on February 8, and it carried him through a storm of criticism to a second-place finish in New Hampshire. Alone among the white Democratic candidates, Gephardt arouses crowds. This is surprising, even to Gephardt, who's always been regarded in Congress as cool and unemotional. But despite raw, drizzly weather, a noontime audience in front of city hall in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, got worked up February 15 when Gephardt denounced the corporate "attitude of selfishness and greed and get mine now, worry about everyone else later [and] survival of the fittest." His spiel is also adjustable. Gephardt sounded less anti-establishment in prosperous New Hampshire than in downtrodden Iowa. With the addition of some pro-military rhetoric, it should make Gephardt formidable in the 13 Southern and border state primaries on Super Tuesday, March 8. In short, he's

now the man to beat for the Democratic nomination.

Gephardt developed his stump speech backwards. Ordinarily a speech is drafted, and snippets of it are used in television commercials. But Gephardt's TV spots, produced by media consultants Robert Shrum and David Doak, came first, and the stump speech grew largely out of them. At the time this happened last December, Gephardt was sinking like a stone. He stood at 6 percent in the Iowa Poll (down from 24 percent), and he was desperate. He insisted that he appear in the commercials and talk mostly about trade and agriculture. Gephardt says he wanted to express his anger over the economic decline of the country and how it affects workers. He'd talked "over and over and over again" to workers who'd lost their jobs. "This gets to you. It goes right to your heart. . . . And then you read the 9,000th editorial saying your trade policy is protectionist and lousy and won't work. You get angry. You want to express this. I finally decided: this is what I believe in, this is what I want to do."

Does Gephardt really believe his transformation as a candidate came about so nobly? I think he does. Most politicians are far less cynical than you imagine. They have no trouble persuading themselves that the politically convenient position is also their heartfelt belief. In 1976 Ronald Reagan really thought the Panama Canal treaties threatened the nation's security. In 1984 Gary Hart believed he was bursting with "new ideas," despite being unable to name many of them. In Gephardt's case, he couldn't deliver his populist message with such passion if he didn't half-way believe it. He may be deluded and demagogic, but he's not entirely manipulative.

The catchy part of the message is an attack on trade barriers that keep out American goods. In December Gephardt told his aides, "What we've got to do is tell people what these countries do to our products." One aide suggested he trace what happens to an American-made pen. "Nobody cares about what pens cost," responded Gephardt. But what about U.S. cars? William Carrick, Gephardt's campaign manager, asked researcher Pat Brookover to "find how much American cars cost overseas." Brookover said he already knew that. In Korea a Ford Taurus costs \$76,000, he said, and a Cadillac \$87,000. He was assigned to find what a Chrysler K car costs. When he did, the fact that the \$10,000 American car costs \$48,000 in Korea became a central point in Gephardt's TV ads and stump speech, wrapped nicely in an assault on the "establishment,"

the "conventional wisdom," "experts," "academics," "editorial writers," the *Wall Street Journal*, "the big multinational oil companies," "big importers," and "the big grain cartels."

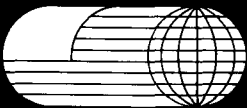
Even before the ads went on the air, Gephardt was stirring audiences in person with his new spiel. Operative Joe Trippi reported back to Gephardt strategists in Washington before Christmas that the candidate was suddenly "sensational" in speeches. At first they thought Trippi was being sycophantic. Finally, one by one, they heard Gephardt for themselves and were astonished.

In Portsmouth Gephardt called for new trade, environmental, and education policies, and said the Social Security and Medicare programs should be run by a separate agency so Republicans won't be able to cut them. But it won't be easy to achieve these goals, he said, because "There are strong resistance forces. . . . They like trade policy the way it is because they make money from it. They don't want to stand up for the right kind of regulation of the environment because they want the quick profits. They don't want to invest in education and training because they are ready to accommodate decline in this country. What they're saying is, 'We must go down, we must decline, let's just manage it so we can make some quick profits off it.'" Gephardt was not specific about who "they" are, but the crowd in Portsmouth didn't seem to mind.



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Reporters mind, and Gephardt and his strategists are eager to woo them. Gephardt invited 10 journalists to a private lunch the day of the New Hampshire primary. His wife, Jane, came too. Later that day, he met with a half-dozen national political reporters. Carrick, who was political director of Teddy Kennedy's Senate staff before taking over the Gephardt campaign, says the press will never understand Gephardt. "I'm going to sound like Spiro Agnew," Carrick says. Journalists covering national politics "are all basically liberal Eastern Establishment people. Culturally they don't like Gephardt. They tell you Gephardt isn't the kind of guy you can go have a beer with. Would they like to go for a beer with Michael Dukakis or Paul Simon?"

The Gephardt campaign goes to great lengths to prove he's not an opportunist. Press secretary Mark Johnson passed out copies of a *Washington Post* article describing Gephardt as an "inside insurgent." The concept is silly, and Gephardt doesn't buy it. "I have not had some concept of how to do this," he says. "I'm just doing—I am what I am." Gephardt is chairman of the House Democratic Caucus and has the endorsement of 80 House Democrats, including Majority Leader Thomas Foley. "I have always believed that what I try to do is to change the status quo where I think it needs changing, but from inside the system," says Gephardt. That makes him an insider, but hardly an insurgent. He's an insider with a spiel.

Foley appeared in New Hampshire with a defense of Gephardt's changes of position. Gephardt has unwavering "principles and goals," Foley said. What changes is his method of achieving them. Gephardt agreed with this explanation. "Look, one of the greatest presidents we ever had was Franklin Roosevelt," he says. "You never had to worry that he had goals and principles and beliefs. But he often experimented and then when he found something didn't work, he changed and went to something else. That's what you have to do. It's unimportant that you be rigidly, almost ideologically, consistent with the way to get something done. But the goals don't change."

On health care, for example, he says, he once opposed a federal role in holding down costs and now favors a limited one. But his goal of "the best possible health care at the lowest possible price" hasn't changed. His shift is politically shrewd. He opposed cost containment in 1979 when anti-government sentiment was running high, but favors it now that this sentiment has subsided.

THE BAD NEWS for Gephardt's foes is that he has taken their best shots and survived. Rather than go after the front-runner in New Hampshire, Dukakis, Simon went on television and radio with ads questioning Gephardt's flip-flops. "The question is, what would a President Gephardt do?" the ads asked. Gephardt was also attacked in a televised debate three days before the primary by Simon, Dukakis, Bruce Babbitt, and Albert Gore. "We took our hits," says Richard Moe, a Gephardt adviser and former aide to Walter Mondale. "Every news organi-

zation did its scrutiny piece. That's legitimate, but it takes its toll." Media consultant Doak says the attacks knocked 10 points off Gephardt's percentage in New Hampshire, and still only Dukakis finished ahead of him.

Now comes payback time. "Some of the other folks are going to have to answer" for their liberal records, especially Dukakis and Simon, says Carrick. Gephardt's message is "evolving," says Moe, and in the South he'll sound hardline on defense and tax cuts. Gephardt says he'll zing Dukakis for opposing Reagan's policy in the Persian Gulf and the Midgetman missile, for "his reluctance to use military power," and for declaring the Monroe Doctrine dead. And Gore won't be able to get to his right on foreign policy issues. "We're awfully close," he says. The chief difference between them is that Gephardt has a spiel on economics. In a presidential race, that's no small thing.

FRED BARNES

Reagan's economic legacy.

ARE YOU BETTER OFF?

BACK IN 1980 the Republicans defiantly—in fact, rhetorically—asked voters the question, "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" So many felt the answer was "no" that Ronald Reagan won in a landslide. The big "no" was based on the "misery index"—the unemployment rate plus the inflation rate—which went from 12.5 in 1976 to 19.5 in 1980, largely because inflation went from 4.8 percent to 12.4 percent. It was also based on the fact that median family income declined during the Carter years, and GNP growth was only 7.7 percent.

We now know that the Carter slide was part of a general stagnation that started with the first oil shock in 1973, before he ever came to office. But Carter was unable to control things, and so he was bounced. During Ronald Reagan's first term, the country endured the deepest recession since the Great Depression and median income dipped some more, but by 1984 the trends were buoyantly up and Reagan won again in a landslide.

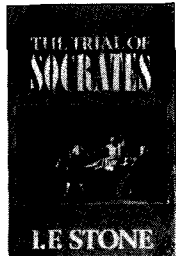
Now it's time to ask the AYBO question again, and the 1988 election may hang on the answer. Republican candidates will say that Reagan turned the corner for the American economy, that peoples' lives are getting better, and that to elect a Democrat would be a return to Carterism—big spending, high taxes, and heavy government regulation. Democrats are saying that Reagan's been a wastrel with a credit card, giving the country a good time on borrowed money, favoring the rich at the expense of the middle class and poor, and dooming us to lower standards of living in the future. What's the truth?

The bottom line is a lot harder to read than it was in the Carter days. In terms of traditional measures—output, in-

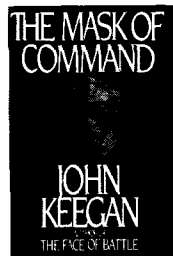
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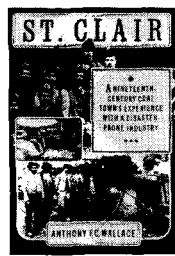
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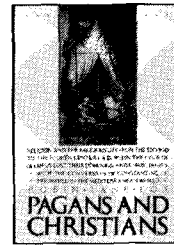
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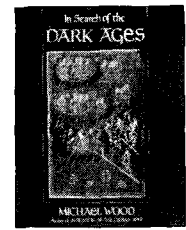
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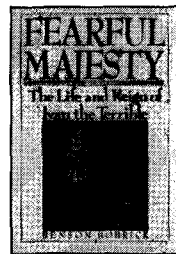
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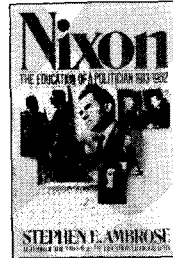
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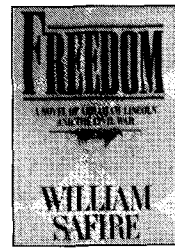
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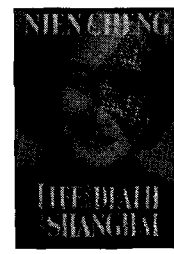
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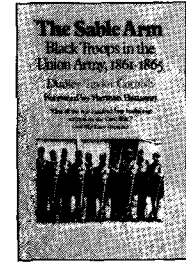
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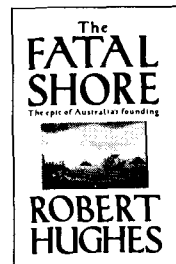
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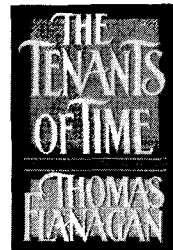
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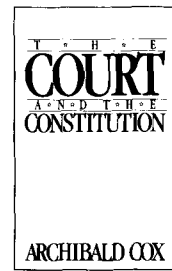
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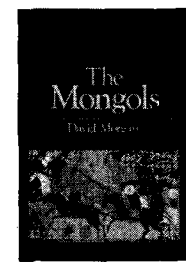
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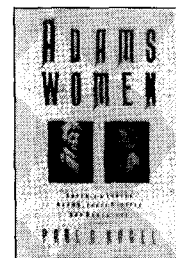
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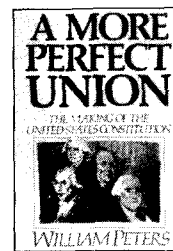
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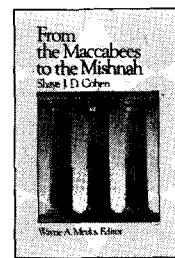
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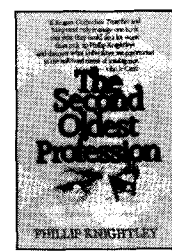
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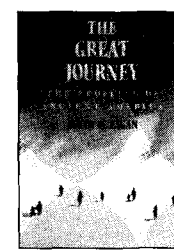
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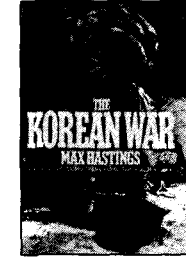
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come, unemployment, and especially inflation—there's no question that the country is better off in 1988 than it was in 1980, though less so than Reaganite rhetoric would have us all believe. A tougher question is whether the Reagan-era improvement was any greater than that of the previous eight years. The answer to that one is: not really. In many measures, the economy moves like Sisyphus's rock. It got to one high point in 1973, and fell. It rose again until 1979, and fell once more. Reagan has it up again. Will it stay? All the measures that give insight on that question—savings rates, productivity, government spending, investment, and debt—suggest that the country is worse off for Reagan's management. So do figures measuring economic equity.

The Republicans do have a 62-month recovery going. They frequently tout the fact that they've created 11 million jobs in the last seven years. What they don't say is that this is almost two million fewer new jobs than during the seven supposedly lean years that preceded Reagan's arrival. Unemployment averaged 6.2 percent last year. This is the lowest since 1979 (when it was 5.8 percent). In other words, we're back where we were toward the end of the Carter administration—another ironic boast. But inflation last year was just 4.4 percent, for a misery index of 10.6, about the level of 1970. Median family income, which decreased from 1973 to 1980 by 2.5 percent, has increased from 1980 to 1987 by 5.3 percent (from \$27,974 to \$29,458). Per capita income increased 4.8 percent in the seven years prior to Reagan, and 12.6 percent during his presidency, from \$10,362 to \$11,670. Per capita disposable (after tax) income—the figure political analysts usually use to determine whether the in-party is likely to stay in—increased 7.5 percent from 1973 to 1980, and has gone up 12.9 percent under Reagan, although its growth for 1987 was nearly flat.

REAL GNP has grown 17.6 percent during the Reagan years, and per capita GNP growth per year has been 1.6 percent. For the preceding seven years, the economy grew 16.8 percent, and per capita growth was 1.4 percent. So for getting the country moving again, Ronald Reagan has done barely better than his immediate predecessors. He has fallen far short of restoring the golden age of the 1950s and 1960s, when GNP grew 35 and 45 percent respectively, and the average family's real income rose by 30 percent per decade.

It's probably too much to expect that a rich, mature country could grow again at the boom rates of a nation just emerging from war and on its way to making the masses middle class. The Reaganites did create unrealistic expectations. More important, they promised that their economic policies would set loose a wave of savings, investment, and productivity improvement that would provide for long-term growth and competitiveness.

This they have not produced. Federal spending represented 22.7 percent of GNP in fiscal 1981 and 22.8 percent in fiscal 1987. The Reaganites did not get control of entitlements, mainly benefits for the middle class, which remained nearly constant at 10.8 percent of GNP. They boosted defense from 5.3 percent of GNP to 6.4 percent

and cut discretionary programs, usually for the poor, from 5.7 percent to 3.7 percent. Above all they increased the debt, and interest payments on it. Reagan decried Carter's 1980 deficit of 2.8 percent of GNP. His 1987 deficit is 3.4 percent. Interest payments have gone from \$95 billion to \$192 billion. Meantime, because of the federal deficit and a deterioration in America's trade position, the U.S. has gone from being a net creditor of \$106 billion in 1980 to a net debtor of \$377 billion in 1988.

THE REAGANITES said their tax cuts would inspire savings, but net domestic savings available for investment, which averaged 7.8 percent of GNP during the 1950s and 1960s and 7 percent even during the droopy 1970s, was down to 1.9 percent for 1987. Private investment, which averaged about 7 percent from 1950 to 1980, is down to 5.3 percent. The United States used to get around half a percent of GNP in investment from abroad. Now it has to get 3.4 percent. This finances jobs, but it also represents debt that will have to be repaid in increased production and diminished consumption—in other words, a lower standard of living.

The good news is that lately things are getting better. The dollar is falling, the trade deficit is shrinking, productivity is increasing, savings are up, and consumption is down. Productivity growth, which averaged .8 percent per year in the seven years prior to Reagan, has increased to 1.4 percent during the Reagan years, though this is still a far cry from the 2-plus percent rates of the 1950s and 1960s.

What does all this mean politically? Democrats will say that the burden of paying off Reagan era debts—in taxes and reduced consumption—means that average Americans will find it harder to fulfill their middle-class dreams. Republicans will say this is manageable, and we are improving in our ability to manage.

Democrats are likely to have an advantage making their case in 1988 because evidence suggests that while the nation as a whole might have become marginally richer during the Reagan years, it has become harder for most people to attain and maintain a middle-class lifestyle.

The most provocative argument of this case is that of economist Frank Levy of the University of Maryland in his book, *Dollars and Dreams: The Changing American Income Distribution* (Russell Sage Foundation). Levy contends that since 1973 the real wages of individual workers have been going down, and that families have managed to keep pace or improve their lifestyles only by adding a second worker. According to Levy, the median income of full-time male workers in 1973 was \$26,000. If postwar growth rates had continued, this median income should have grown to about \$31,000 in 1984. But in fact, the average full-time male worker then made only \$23,218. In 1986 he made \$25,900, back about to the level of 1973. The percentage of families making \$30,000 per year declined from 51 percent in 1973 to 45 percent in 1984. By 1987 that figure, too, was just returning to its 1973 level.

Levy also has developed data confirming Democratic suspicions that economic inequality increased during the Reagan years—though he does not agree with those who

contend that the middle class is disappearing, with the bulk drifting toward poverty. His figures indicate that the average person on the lowest fifth of the income ladder lost \$728 in yearly income between 1979 and 1986, from \$8,761 to \$8,033. Those in the next lowest fifth went down from \$19,544 to \$18,859. Those in the middle fifth stayed above \$29,000, but still lost \$150 per year. In the next-to-highest fifth, the average income increased from \$40,606 to \$41,909. Those in the highest bracket increased their average from \$70,000 to \$76,000. (All these figures are inflation-indexed.)

Other indicators contain more evidence that the poor have been made worse off during the Reagan years. The percentage of children in poverty was 17.9 in 1980; now it's 19.8, an increase from 11 million to 12 million children. The percentage of all persons living below the government poverty line stayed at about 13 percent. The so-called "real" poverty rate—taking into account non-cash benefits such as food stamps—actually rose from 11 percent in 1980 to 12 percent in 1986.

In general, voters do not elect presidents based on whether someone else is better off—but whether they are. Recent polls indicate that voters do feel they've personally benefitted during the Reagan years—by 53-17 according to a USA Today/CNN poll, 48-35 according to Harris and 41-17 according to Roper. But asked how they expected the economy to do in the future, only 18 percent in a *Washington Post*/ABC poll said it would get better, while 45 percent thought it would get worse. According to a *New York Times*/CBS poll in January, 44 percent thought the economy would improve over the next five years, but this was down from 60 percent a year before.

Asked which party they thought was better able to improve the economy, the score is almost tied—48 for the Democrats, 44 for the Republicans in a *Washington Post*/ABC poll. For reducing the trade deficit, Democrats led 46-21 and for reducing the budget deficit, it was Democrats 44-42. This indecision cries out for a candidate to say what he'll do to pay Reagan's debts. But, then, Bruce Babbitt did take the risk, and look at what happened to him.

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

MONEY CULTURE

MORGAN'S FAST ONE

IN LATE DECEMBER a senior Treasury official called a *Wall Street Journal* reporter with a hot tip. The Morgan Guaranty Bank, he said, was about to announce a major breakthrough on the debt crisis, with the support of the Mexican and American governments. According to the official, it was the first time that the banks and a major

debtor country had been able to agree on a plan for a significant debt reduction.

The plan allegedly had something for everyone. The Mexicans would get a chance to reduce their \$100 billion foreign debt by \$20 billion with a single stroke. Foreign banks would be able to unload their illiquid Mexican loans in exchange for new marketable securities, backed by U.S. bonds. The plan would serve as a model for other countries. Treasury Secretary James Baker would recoup the prestige that he had lost since the demise of his 1985 "Baker plan" for resolving the debt problem. Oddly, the credit-hungry U.S. Treasury also would get a \$2 billion loan from the Mexican government, of all places.

THE BIGGEST WINNER of all, however, would be the Morgan Bank. Morgan would earn at least a half percent management fee from the Mexicans just for running their three-day bond auction. Morgan also would be able to dispose of some of its own nearly \$1 billion of Mexican loans. And the plan would enhance Morgan's image as an innovative *investment* bank, helping it compete for other debt restructuring assignments.

The Treasury leak was part of an orchestrated and wildly successful p.r. campaign on behalf of the Morgan scheme. The world's most respected media, including the *Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, and the BBC, all treated it as a watershed event in the history of the debt problem. But as the deadline for the Mexican bond auction approaches, and as the fine print of the offering prospectus has become available, it is clear that this Morgan/Mexico plan has been vastly oversold. It is just another in a series of mythical solutions to the debt crisis that have been devised and promoted by many of the same bankers and public officials who were responsible for the crisis in the first place.

The essence of the Morgan plan is that Mexico will offer its foreign banks up to \$10 billion of new 20-year bonds, in exchange for whatever amount of old due-bills the banks are willing to trade in for them. The hope and expectation is that a dollar of new bonds will cancel out more than a dollar of old loans. Why should that be? The new bonds will offer two clear advantages over the bank loans, and one other more speculative advantage.

The first explicit advantage is that the new bonds promise a higher yield—about eight-tenths of a percent more than the average interest rate on Mexico's current outstanding debt. The second advantage is that Mexico will guarantee the repayment of the \$10 billion of bond principal—but not interest!—by purchasing "zero-coupon" U.S. government bonds (that is, bonds that pay no interest) redeemable in 20 years for \$10 billion. The bonds will be deposited at the New York Federal Reserve Bank and pledged as security for Mexico's own bonds. Those bonds (since they pay no interest) will cost Mexico \$2 billion, which will go to the U.S. Treasury.

Assuming that the U.S. government is still good for the money when these bonds mature in 2008, this collateral

insures that the banks will recover their principal. However, repayment of principal in the distant future is only a small fraction of the value of a bond. (That's why \$10 billion of zero-coupon bonds sells for only \$2 billion.) The prospectus for the Mexican deal makes it clear that if the Mexicans stop paying interest the bondholders have no recourse except to wait until 2008 and get their principal back.

The third advantage of the new bonds over the old loans—hinted at but not officially asserted—is that they will become “senior securities.” That is, the bonds will take priority over the loans if Mexico starts picking and choosing which of its financial obligations to meet. In ordinary corporate lending, banks write all sorts of covenants into loan agreements to protect themselves against precisely this kind of “sneaky subordination.” In their loans to Third World nations, however, the banks had no way to do this. Morgan is using that fact for all it is worth in marketing its new scheme.

However, the new Mexican bonds also have two very important disadvantages compared with the outstanding loans. First, they have a 20-year life span, compared with the loans' average maturity of about ten years. The Mexican bonds can be freely traded during this period like any other bonds, but as longer-term bonds their capital value will fluctuate more with interest rates (and with guesses about Mexico's economic prospects). Second, any bank that exchanges, say, \$14 of Mexican loans for ten dollars of new bonds will have to acknowledge a loss of four dollars on their books. Many banks, including Morgan itself, have prepared for this by building up loss reserves. And, to be sure, the loss is there whether acknowledged or not (since the loans are bad). But weaker banks, including some big ones such as Bank of America, may find it a strain to bring their books in line with reality.

WHAT DOES the whole Morgan financial cocktail add up to? Start with the new bonds themselves. After all, Mexico could just as easily offer new, uncollateralized, dollar-denominated bonds to the general public, without any hocus-pocus about “debt swaps” or “zero coupons.” How much would \$10 billion of such 20-year Mexican bonds, paying a slightly higher interest rate, be worth compared with \$10 billion of currently outstanding Mexican loans?

One could easily get lost in a sophisticated analysis of this question, trading off the bonds' higher interest rates and greater liquidity against the bank loans' lower immediate write-offs and shorter maturities. These shorter maturities may be quite important. After all, at Mexico's current rate of growth about half of the Mexicans of the year 2008 haven't been born yet. Who knows how they will feel about servicing the bonds that the other half issued?

When all is said and done, though, a reasonable guess is that \$10 billion of such unsecured, 20-year bonds would probably be worth about the same as \$10 billion of typical bank loans to Mexico. Or, as most laymen would have concluded right from the start, “Mexican debt is Mexican debt

is Mexican debt.” But of course if the Mexicans had simply announced that they were trading \$10 billion of new bonds for \$10 billion of their old foreign debt, there would have been few takers, and not much in the way of bankers' fees.

Now, what value is added to this \$10 billion “no brainer” by Morgan's fancy zero-coupon arrangement with the U.S. Treasury? Again it is helpful to consider close substitutes. There was nothing to prevent banks from going to the Treasury and buying the same 20-year, zero-coupon bonds that Mexico has bought for \$2 billion. Treasury rhetoric aside, there is nothing special about these bonds. Under the impetus of our continuing budget deficits the Treasury is probably quite happy to be in the “designer bond” business.

Furthermore, if the banks wanted to finance the purchase of such bonds by selling off their Mexican loans, they didn't need Morgan to do it. Since 1982 a “secondary market” has existed for the bank loans of most Third World countries, including those of Mexico. This market is thin, but it is certainly large enough to raise the \$2 billion. Recently Mexican bank loans have been trading in the neighborhood of 50 to 60 cents on the dollar in this market. So if the banks wanted to guarantee themselves \$10 billion in 2008, they could have done it by selling off about \$4 billion of Mexican loans.

SO HOW MANY dollars in old Mexican loans should sensible banks be willing to trade in for \$10 billion in new Mexican bonds? The answer is about \$14 billion—\$10 billion for the bond itself and another \$4 billion for security sitting at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York. A few extra pennies might also be tossed in for the value of Morgan's influence at the Treasury and Hacienda. But the total is clearly well below the “\$20 billion debt reduction” that was touted in the initial press coverage.

Of course the banks might decide to bid more than \$14 in loans for each \$10 of new bonds. If so, however, this will only be either because they believe that the extra value can be taken out of the hides of their fellow bankers, via “sneaky subordination,” or because they are stupid—given the track record, a possibility not to be discounted entirely.

So who benefits from the Morgan/Mexico plan? Mainly Morgan's financial advisers. Banks as a whole are not clearly better off, even if they manage to avoid the risk of overbidding at the auction. Individual banks may feel good about being able to dump their Mexican loans once and for all. But to the extent that the new bonds are more secure because of sneaky subordination, that just makes the remaining debt less secure. The total amount of risk in the system is about the same. The banks that continue to hold the old Mexican debt will include many of the weaker ones. Their negotiating leverage in any future debt discussions with the Mexicans will not be strengthened by the fact that many of their stronger peers have bailed out.

What about the Mexicans? They too may actually be worse off with the Morgan plan than without it. First, they've just shelled out \$2 billion of their precious foreign exchange reserves for the zero coupons. On a cash flow

basis, even if \$15 billion of loans are turned in at the auction and \$500 million a year of interest is saved (interest they weren't necessarily going to pay anyway), this investment won't break even for five years—a long time in Mexican political life. Second, they've also laid out a \$50 million fee to Morgan. There were better things to do with these resources. Third, the Mexicans have effectively just spent \$2 billion to buy back \$4 billion of their own foreign debt on the "secondary market." But the economic situation in Mexico is deteriorating sharply—in six months they could

probably buy back their own debt, if they wanted to, for even less.

The one common criticism of the Morgan plan that I do not share is the fact that it cannot easily be replicated by other debtor countries, for various reasons. In fact, that's the best thing about it.

JAMES S. HENRY

James S. Henry is writing a book about Third World debt.

And other secrets of America's political make-over queen.

'SOME INTEREST AROUND THE NECK'

BY PHILIP WEISS

"There's a wonderful secret about eyes."

"Are you allowed to give it away?"

"I have to. First go to Bush. Tell me about Bush's eyes."

"They're sort of squinty?"

"Do they really communicate with you? They don't really. The eyes really must be very present, not absent, because that's where we're looking for credibility and sincerity, and you can also reach *soul* with the eyes if used this [secret] way. You see, we cannot look into both eyes at the same time, can we?"

"We can't?"

"Impossible. Try it. You'll go cross-eyed."

The eyes I was looking cross-eyed into were hazel and set in a pretty triangular face under a hair-mass stout as adobe and above a huge gold choker and large black beads. (The technical term for these last items, I later learned, is "some interest around the neck.") The eyes belonged to a legend of the era of politics on TV, Dorothy Sarnoff. Sarnoff is a former Broadway star, best known in that earlier incarnation for playing opposite Yul Brynner in *The King and I*. These days she is most famous for the open-heart surgery she claims to have performed on Bob Dole when she told him to change his image eight years ago. A lot of people told Bob Dole to change his image, but Sarnoff is generally credited with having told him how.

Mostly she works for New York corporate types who have to give speeches. Her company, Speech Dynamics, is a subsidiary of the advertising firm Ogilvy and Mather. But a lot of the people she's retrofitted, for \$3,500 and up, are politicians: Senators Ernest Hollings and Lloyd Bentsen, Maine Governor John McKernan Jr., for-

mer transportation secretary Elizabeth Dole.

In Sarnoff's video room—séance-dim lighting, an egg timer, video equipment—she revealed to me her "secret" about eyes: you must move your attention from one eye to the other as you talk. That way the light in your eyes keeps changing and your interlocutor does not get a glazed look.

When talking politics, Sarnoff doesn't treat welfare policy. She gets excited about eyes and tongue. Her big word is "soul." She worries about how to project soul, how to make eye contact, how to let your personality flow wetly out to the person on the other side of the tube.

For an adviser to politicians, she knows next to nothing about politics. She confuses the Georges, Bush and Shultz (true, they're vaguely anagramatic). She was at a loss when discussing the latest crop of presidential contenders. Dukakis draws a blank. "I haven't really watched him." She doesn't do much better on Jesse Jackson ("There is something in the eyes that are not Cuomo's eyes"), Paul Simon ("My impression is bow tie"), Pat Robertson ("He hasn't made any impression on me at all"), or Bruce Babbitt ("Where did I read about how he was doing better?"). As for Mikhail Gorbachev, Sarnoff says his eye contact is better than any of the other "Russian dictators," but she still doesn't trust him (look at the back shot the Russians gave Tom Brokaw during that interview).

The dollar cost of the full Sarnoff treatment is around \$3,600 for six hours, usually done by the sixtyish consultant (she won't say her age) in her Speech Dynamics office on West 57th Street in New York. Another cost that potential clients ought to know about is bragging rights. Sarnoff is a great self-promoter and name-dropper. Once word of a makeover gets out (and sometimes even when it doesn't), the woman who calls herself the "world's foremost speech and image consultant" will tell the world what she did for a

Philip Weiss is a contributing editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*.

client, or how, in her coin, "we turned him around."

Sarnoff says she helped Jimmy Carter to give the "best [speech] he ever did" as president, when she stood in the Oval Office next to the camera and shook her fist in the air giving him "energy signals." Which speech? "The Cuban speech," she says vaguely.

I asked her to tell me how she turned Fritz Hollings around before his 1984 presidential bid.

"I can't. I really can't. I'll tell you if it's confidential," meaning off-the-record.

"Then we better not talk about it."

She reconsidered for an instant.

"I'll tell you what I did for Hollings. He came into the room and he spoke very slowly. So I said, Senator, it's too old. . . . You've got to *stride* into a room and as you change your pace in walking you've got to change your pace in talking—and the third thing I did for him I can't tell you which is the most important thing of all." But in her new book, *Never Be Nervous Again* (Crown), Sarnoff reveals the third thing as well, in a transparent reference to a white-haired, slow-talking senator: she got Hollings to dye his eyebrows brown, thus taking years off his image.

ORIGINALLY the idea was that I would undergo a makeover myself, but Sarnoff was cool to this. I had to have a real need, or bring someone who had a real need. Why, right now she was working with an important politician who had a *very* real need. Who? Oh, she couldn't say. But without a real need it would be playacting. "I can't do a phony thing and feel honest," she said with a wounded air.

On the wall of Sarnoff's office were photos of some of her reconstructed souls: the actress Nastassia Kinski, former Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, former Ambassador Sol M. Linowitz. Nearby was a bulletin board layered with letters from clients remembering Sarnoff's saving techniques. One was from a man Sarnoff had done at a British investment bank the year before, "when my name was Robin Johnston. I have now left Rothschild's and have become Lord Derwent on the death of my father." He had given his opening speech to the House of Lords and come through with flying colors, thanks to Sarnoff. "You have given me the encouragement to speak truthfully and to reach for the soul of the audience. There have been kings and presidents who would have paid highly for such wisdom," said someone who worked for a Tennessee gas company.

Sarnoff also showed me notebooks filled with these letters—the LUV file, she calls them. "Your spirit entered my soul," and so forth. Some were so personal they were excruciating to read. I can't imagine anyone expected them to be shown to a reporter. (One was headed PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL.) The helpless flocked to her like American hajji: Toronto's Speedy Muffler King, a Chicago Cadillac dealer, the Pomfret School's headmistress, a Nebraska chiropractor, a Kentucky tobacco man, a New Orleans cardiologist, an Indianapolis charm school instructor, the author of Lee Iacocca's autobiography (and the Mayflower Madam's and Tip O'Neill's), soap men and soup men and

tire peddlers and prophylactics men—it seemed like the whole GNP had come limping through her office. Many letter writers repeated the mantra Sarnoff encourages her students to mumble over and over to calm themselves before speaking. *I'm glad I'm here, I'm glad you're here, I like you a lot, I know what I know.*

These cases, Sarnoff's bread and butter, aren't so different from the people who began seeking out public speaking courses early in this century at a time of surging professionalization and mobility. The big challenge for Dale Carnegie, just as it is for Sarnoff, was getting people to overcome nervousness in a business setting. Sarnoff's various gimmicks—the wheel method, the eyes-up system, phrase-a-line speaking, the vital center, love apples (the way cheeks look in a smile), and the Sarnoff squeeze (don't ask)—recall Carnegie's tricks of 60 years back: Avoid "weasel words," "LOVE YOUR AUDIENCE," "exercises for surrendering the jaw." The big difference is that Sarnoff isn't just priming people for the Manufacturers Club meeting. Now there's television as well.

Talking to Sarnoff, there is a feeling of being on another planet, one with touchy-feely atmosphere. "I never feel as though I *know* Nancy Reagan, do you?" Sarnoff said. (I shook my head.) Love and soul and joy and kindness, that's what we talked about. As such former clients as *American Spectator* editor R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. emphasize, Sarnoff is a very positive person. "I never criticize in this room," she said. All this sounds kooky, but I think this is Sarnoff's gift, such as it is. She takes people into her intimate space, locks her hazel gaze on them, and convinces them she has all the secrets of communication. Bucking up another nervous CEO, she's the wizard giving the lion the courage award. Thomas S. Murphy, the tight-fisted chairman of Capital Cities/ABC, was so pleased that he spontaneously doubled Sarnoff's fee.

THE TRANSFORMATIONS on Sarnoff's Before and After video are amazing. Great plastic surgeons must have similar videos. She gets rid of glasses ("I invented something called fast food for the eyes"), stutters, mustaches ("There are good mustaches." "Hitler's?" "Well it made him look menacing, so it was right for his characterization. Like his screaming was right for his audience."), slouches, quirky dress, naked necks, vests, accents. "Look at his face, that's in two hours," she kept saying.

Alexandra Penney, author of *How to Make Love to a Man*, was made over from demure mumbler in oatmealish scoop neck to brassy sitting-up-straighter in primary colors—and some interest around the neck. "She was incredible," says Penney (who nevertheless was surprised to learn her grim tape is on the promotional video). "She made me comfortable with a subject [sex] that was very hard for me to talk about. Between practical and psychological tips, she gave me a sense of self [on air] I never had." Penney was happy to hide behind her byline when talking about sex, but it took Dorothy Sarnoff to get her to go naked before a TV audience.

Nastassia Kinski came to Sarnoff after a blowout on the

Letterman show. Her agent was appalled. Sarnoff took her firmly in hand, making over the static-electric hairdo, monosyllabic mental orbit, and squirmy posture with finishing school gloss. Now seen in the limp hair of the quondam sex star was a ribbon you might put around a bottle of perfume. The body had a neutered dignity. The full lips that have excited membranes on so many sides of the Atlantic were concentrated on elocution.

PLAINLY this is what Sarnoff does best—meets a client and gets an instant take on his or her personality and offers some shrewd tips that have a sweeping effect. She is to the TV age what a penmanship instructor was to the world of handwriting, ironing out quirks, allowing the feeble to communicate. And for her political clients, who have long since beaten their nervousness, Sarnoff cuts out a tin heart; she confers TV sincerity. Time was that public speaking meant speeches to audiences that were specially convened and expecting a speech. Their relationship with the speaker was formal. Nothing's formal about TV. The television watcher is sitting at home, often alone. TV has made public discourse almost intimate. Along the way, notoriously, it has changed politics, helping to reduce the powers of party bosses and other intermediaries. Politics has become a conversation with the voters. Thus Sarnoff's video liturgy: opening lines that keep viewers from turning the channel, blue shirts, hair out of your eyes, some interest around the neck, etc. There's no room here to lament television's grip on American public personality and politics, but Sarnoff doesn't make things any better. It's already the cool medium. Sarnoff takes it down to freezing.

Bob Dole? "In 1979 he'd had a very bad debate," Sarnoff says, apparently misplacing the famous "Democratic wars" debate of 1976. "And it was right there that we turned him around. Then you started to see the Dole that you see now." Dole used to slouch at the lectern to hide his crippled right arm. "Remember? The good hand was here?" She mimes him at the lectern in the blackened studio. Dorothy Sarnoff convinced him to stand up straight, but mostly she worked on his personality. Out with the snideness, in with classy suits that fit snugly against the back of his shirt collar, in order to avoid what she calls an "authority gap."

"When you put down somebody, you don't win. They win."

"What was his reaction to that advice?"

"He agreed."

A Dole aide says Sarnoff offered some helpful suggestions, but bridles at the notion that one meeting with Sarnoff transformed him. "People spend years in analysis without changing that much." Well, Sarnoff had told me that Dole was a "quick learner."

Yet another miracle surrounds the smiting of CBS national correspondent Lesley Stahl. "She had a small job at CBS, and she wanted to be a co-anchor but she couldn't get the job," Sarnoff says, conjuring (with voice and hand gestures) a mousy figure who crept through her door one day. "She said, 'You know, I don't think CBS will take me

seriously if I don't wear glasses.' I took the glasses off of her. We just turned Lesley around in a total of six hours and then she got the job she wanted." Stahl did not return repeated calls, one detailing Sarnoff's claims.

THE STAHL interchange touches on a curious aspect of Sarnoff's healing: her distaste for aggressive women. Sarnoff is an old-world gal. Mention Geraldine Ferraro to her and she talks about her "arrogance," describing how Ferraro put down George Bush and hurt herself. (I always thought it was the other way around.) Her first book, *Speech Can Change Your Life* (1970), recommends such punch lines as "I wish Adam had died with all his ribs in his body" and "I have never seen a pair of slacks that had very much slack in them" and woman is "a perpetual emotion machine." Today her advice to women reflects a traditional idea of femininity.

Thus it came as a surprise to learn the identity of the secret politician "with a real need" Sarnoff had touted to me last summer. It turns out this was Colorado Representative Pat Schroeder, the feminist who'd considered a run for the presidency. "I didn't leak her being here. I guess her staff did," Sarnoff said. But once the word got out, Sarnoff was only too happy to tell all.

It must have been an odd meeting. Schroeder practices a fresh, direct sort of politics. As for Sarnoff, for all her talk of soul, she is more caught up with surfaces than even the TV camera. (She says that Gorbachev should have powdered out his birthmark.) Television does tyrannize our politics, but the mistake is concluding that people judge candidates on the superficial level, as Sarnoff believes. Who cares whether Fritz Hollings's eyebrows are white?

Sarnoff persuaded Schroeder to comb her bangs off her brows and to stand up straighter at the lectern. But the big about-face, the road-to-Damascus conversion, was that Pat Schroeder put on earrings. Margaret Thatcher wears earrings and people still take her seriously, Sarnoff counseled. Schroeder now has three pairs. Ironically, one major piece of advice Schroeder refused to take concerned ruffles. Schroeder the feminist likes them; Sarnoff the old-fashioned girl is opposed. "Dorothy Sarnoff would kill me; I'm going to wear my ruffles," Schroeder said.

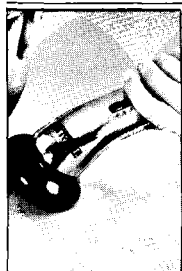
Sarnoff is not altogether pleased by her former pupil. With an undercurrent of dismay, she watched the famous crying speech, in which Schroeder announced she wasn't running for president. It wasn't so much that Schroeder had cried. "If her husband hadn't given her that big white handkerchief and you'd just seen that *soul* look in her eyes, it would have been great," Sarnoff says. "Let's look at it. Let's do it. Do you have a handkerchief?"

I didn't. She found a small one and did stacy motions so as to make it seem far larger.

"He took out this big handkerchief and this is what you saw, and there was something that lacked authority and presence. If one had—if a woman had simply done..." she mimed a woman dabbing delicately at her eye with a small, balled-up handkerchief—"that would have been *neat*." □

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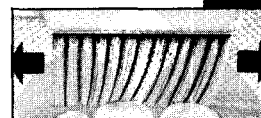
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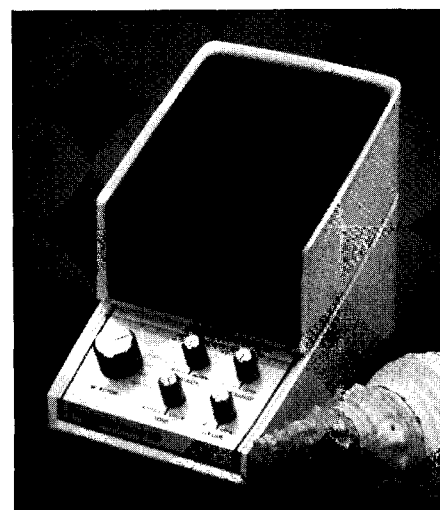


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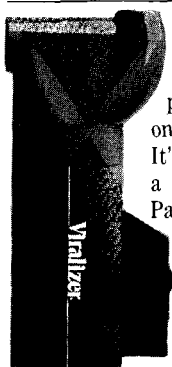
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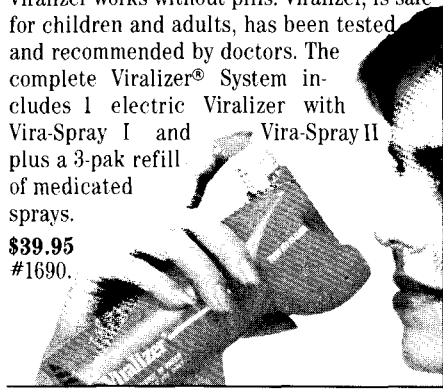
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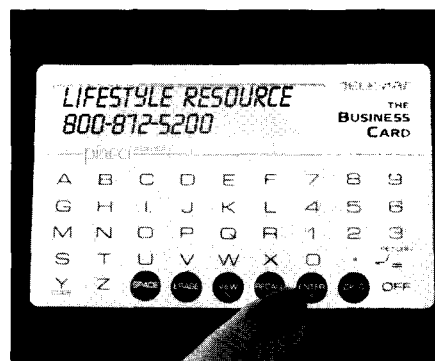
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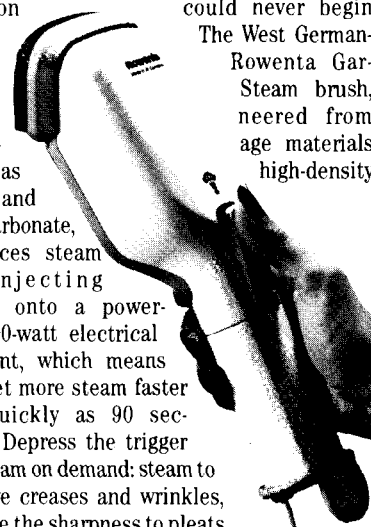
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BOOKS AND THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Digging Up the Past

A Month in the Country—nothing to do with Turgenev—was adapted by Simon Gray from a novel by J. L. Carr. I don't know the novel, but I do know some of Gray's plays and can recognize, however much of Carr was kept, Gray's billiard-player dialogue and adroit use of form to support theme.

A Month in the Country
(Orion Classics)

Mélo
(European Classics)

Two themes are intertwined: recovery and discovery. The place and time are England right after the First World War. Just as that war always seems more terrible than the second one, not in casualties but in destruction of the past, so the years immediately after the first seem more painful than those after the second because the survivors were more roughly disinherited than the next generation of survivors. The war has left the central figure in this film, played by Colin Firth, with nightmares and a dreadful stutter. Also, attendant circumstances made his wife abandon him.

He is an art restorer, and he comes to a Yorkshire hamlet to uncover a painted-over 15th-century mural in a small church. He has been engaged by a local wealthy woman. The church's minister, Patrick Malahide, is not enthusiastic about Firth's project. He likes the plainness of his church and thinks the painting will distract worshippers.

In a tent outside the church lives a young archaeologist, Kenneth Branagh, also a war veteran, also engaged by the same wealthy woman to find the grave of an ancestor of hers. Branagh thinks he will find more than that. We learn that Branagh's larky manner covers some unorthodox behavior at the war's end. Both young men are engaged in recovery, outward and inner.

For Firth, matters grow more complex when he meets the minister's wife, Natasha Richardson, and they are attracted to each other. Nothing happens between them other than some conversations that, by not mentioning their feelings, express them. But the experience seems to move Firth further away from the numbness caused by the war and his wife's desertion toward an openness that signifies health.

The Yorkshire locals, whose dialect is sometimes impenetrable, are divided religiously between church (Anglican) and chapel (non-Anglican), and Firth, with no religious convictions of his own, gets entangled in some chapel activities. The religious oppositions are underscored by a discovery he makes in the Bosch-like mural he is uncovering, a surprise confirmed by a discovery that Branagh makes in a grave. The men's recovery and their discoveries are linked.

A Month in the Country is so good that it ought to be better. Only one of the cast, Malahide, who had several roles in the recent PBS-BBC serial *The Singing Detective*, overacts. Firth, last seen in *Another Country*, has dark, rude persistence as he gropes for life. Branagh has the casual upper-class charm of Nigel Havers plus a touch of Puck. Natasha Richardson is the daughter of Vanessa Redgrave (a fact that was especially telling in the London production of *The Seagull* I saw two years ago in which they both appeared). Richardson sounds much as her mother did at this age, and if she doesn't yet have anything like her mother's command, she hasn't yet had the parts or experience to provide it.

The cinematography by Ken Macmillan is English pastoral of the first order, à la *Room with a View* and *The Shooting Party*. The trouble with the film—its ultimate lack of satisfaction—devolves on the director, Pat O'Connor. His previous film, *Cal*, showed him trudging in well-worn paths of cine-

matic "sensitivity." Here, from the opening sequence, a nightmare of Firth's, to such moments as Richardson's first appearance—her face floats in as seen from below by the reclining Firth—O'Connor frequently makes us think of films past rather than drama present. Nothing in the story is startlingly original, but it could have had more force in the hands of a director free of cliché.

Henry Bernstein (1876-1953) was a very popular Parisian boulevard playwright, a craftsman of light plays on weighty subjects. Many of his plays were made into films. *Mélo* (1929) was filmed five times, two of those versions in German—with Elisabeth Bergner in 1932 and with Maria Schell in 1952.

Now Alain Resnais has filmed it again with himself as star, so to speak, and with apparently very little screen adaptation. The reasons for Resnais's choice lie elsewhere than in the quality of this conventional, skillfully machined piece. One guess: he had worked with his four principal actors twice before and found a script that would accommodate them again. Another guess: filming it more or less as it is in the original would

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Broadcast News. The promise of satire fizzles, but this comedy about TV newspeople is very brightly written, directed, and played. (Reviewed 2/1/88)

The Dead. John Huston's last film tries to honor Joyce's masterpiece, but the closest it comes is in the performance by Huston's daughter, Anjelica. (12/21/87)

Housekeeping. Two young sisters and their guardian, an eccentric aunt, in the mountainous Northwest. Seemingly a daft comedy, it grows to large resonance. (1/18/88)

The Unbearable Lightness of Being. A three-hour collection of scraps from Kundera's rich novel. The actors are so good that you wish they had a better adaptation to perform. (2/29/88)

SK

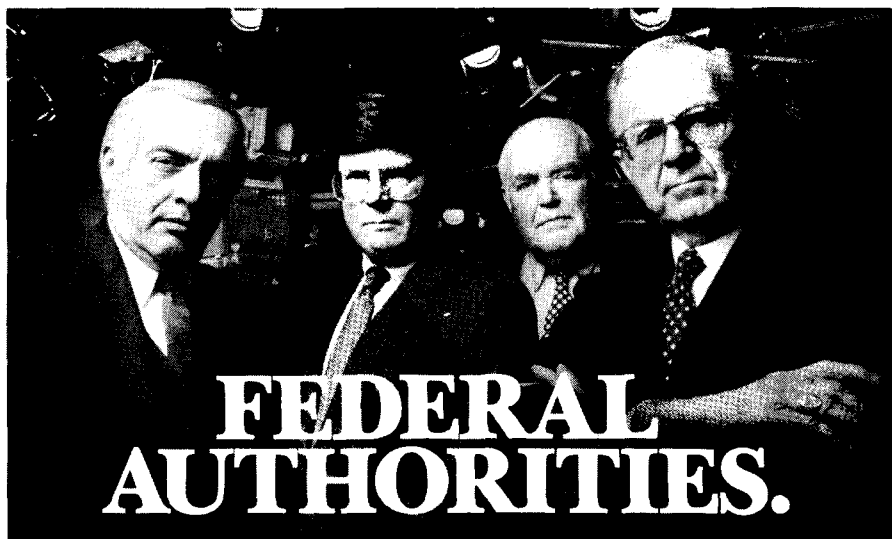
challenge his ingenuity.

Essentially it's a triangle comedy-drama with one appended character. André Dussolier plays a successful violinist who visits a conservatory classmate, Pierre Arditi, now much less successful, and meets Arditi's wife, Sabine Azema. (The wife's role was obviously built up in the German versions.) Her cousin, Fanny Ardant, is briefly introduced. Azema then contrives a visit to Dussolier's apartment, and they become lovers.

The play deepens, relatively speaking, as the wife develops torments of conscience and kills herself. The big scene is between the two men in the third act. (I use the word "act" because Resnais keeps reminding us of theater provenance: a curtain at the beginning, twice during the film, and again at the end.) It's three years later. Arditi, now married to Ardant, is about to leave Paris forever; he visits Dussolier and beseeches him to confess that he was Azema's lover. Just to have it settled in his mind. Dussolier lies with complete conviction—to reassure Pierre, to keep relationships as they are, and probably also to assure himself that he *can* lie, that he can play a role as well as he plays the violin.

The play/film is Dussolier's to make, and he succeeds. He lies with such heartfelt sincerity that he achieves the small frisson that Bernstein was after: How can we ever know when someone is speaking the truth? Azema (who was the artist's capricious daughter in *A Sunday in the Country*) has dazzle and shade. Arditi has exactly the right tone, a self-knowledge of mediocrity without self-pity. Ardant is adequate in her small role.

Resnais has solved all the problems involved. The film takes place mainly in three settings, and most of the time he keeps it from feeling confined, no small achievement in a piece that runs almost two hours. The question remains: Why did he want to solve these particular problems? Can he really believe that there are profundities in the play, or did he just want to work again with these four actors? Or did he want to show that he could deal with a lightweight boulevard play as well as his heavier materials in the past? In fact I enjoyed *Mélo* much more than the last Resnais I saw, *Mon Oncle d'Amerique*, but it's still like an encore piece, after a serious recital, an encore that runs almost two hours.



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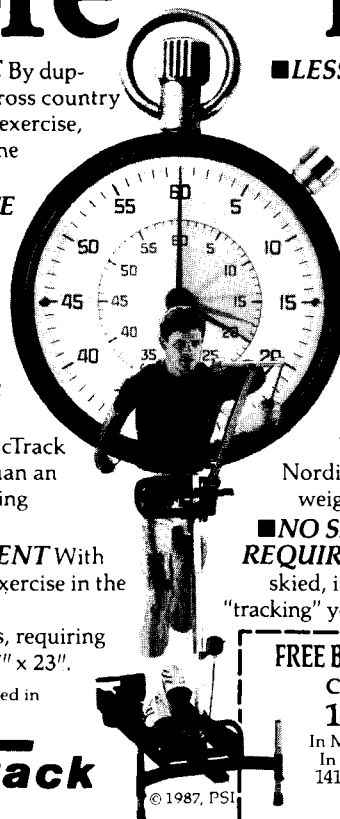
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BLINDNESS AND INSIGHT

By GEOFFREY HARTMAN

LAST DECEMBER it became known that a Belgian researcher, Ortwin de Graef, had discovered writings from the early career of Paul de Man, the seminal deconstructionist thinker who died in 1983. They were reviews of books, concerts, and conferences. Almost all of these writings date from after the fall of Belgium in May 1940. Except for a few articles in *Les Cahiers du Libre Examen* ("Notebooks of Free Inquiry"), a journal associated with the University of Brussels, and a few more in a Flemish language journal, *Het Vlaamsche Land* ("The Flemish Land"), the bulk of them (close to 170) were written for the important Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* ("The Evening"). During the period that de Man published in *Le Soir* and *Het Vlaamsche Land*, they were under some Nazi censorship. *Le Soir*, in particular, followed the Nazi line in many respects; after its takeover it received the nickname "Le Soir Volé" ("The Stolen Evening").

The shock of finding de Man's early articles in collaborationist journals was increased by the fact that one of them engaged explicitly with the ideology of anti-Semitism. Under the headline "The Jews in Contemporary Literature," de Man argued that Jews do not have a significant influence on contemporary literature; that charges about this literature being judaized (*enjuivé*) serve merely to discredit that literature; that the Jews themselves helped to spread this myth of their influence; that the ability of Western intellectuals to safeguard so representative a cultural domain as literature from Jewish influence is comforting. De Man leaves it unclear whether it is comforting because Jewishness itself is unhealthy, or because *any* invasion of Western civilization by a foreign force, a "*force étrangère*," would reflect badly on its vitality. He concluded:

By preserving, despite the semitic intrusion into all aspects of European life, an originality and a character that have remained intact, our civilization has shown that it is healthy in its deep nature. Moreover, we

can anticipate that a solution of the Jewish problem that would envisage the creation of a Jewish colony isolated from Europe would not result, for the literary life of the West, in regrettable consequences. The latter would lose, all in all, some people of mediocre value, and would continue as in the past to develop according to its own great laws of evolution.

This is not vulgar anti-Semitic writing, not by the terrible standards of the day. But the fact remains that, however polished de Man's formulations are, they show all the marks, and the dangerous implications, of identifying Jews as an alien and unhealthy presence in Western civilization. De Man's article, moreover, is framed on the page of the paper by a nasty cartoon, a caricature of two Jews in prayer shawls imploring God, which is captioned, "May Jehovah confound the Goy"; and by a quotation attributed to Benjamin Franklin: "A leopard can't change its spots. The Jews are Orientals [*Asiatiques*]; they are a menace for the country that lets them in, and they should be excluded by the Constitution." (The source of these falsely attributed sentences was an American forgery, which originated in 1934 and was refuted by Charles Beard and others. It circulated widely among German and American Nazis.)

It is hardly necessary to point out that in March 1941, when this article appeared, Jews were still seeking refuge in unoccupied France, the United States, South America, Switzerland, and elsewhere. De Man was writing in a collaborationist paper, then, at a vulnerable period, when the "colony isolated from Europe" was turning into sealed ghettos and concentration camps, in part because this "foreign" element could not find a home elsewhere and was treated like a disease or a pollutant that had to be contained. In the light of history, de Man's article—and the cartoon and quotation that accompanied it (for which he may not have been responsible)—become more than a theoretical expression of anti-Semitism.

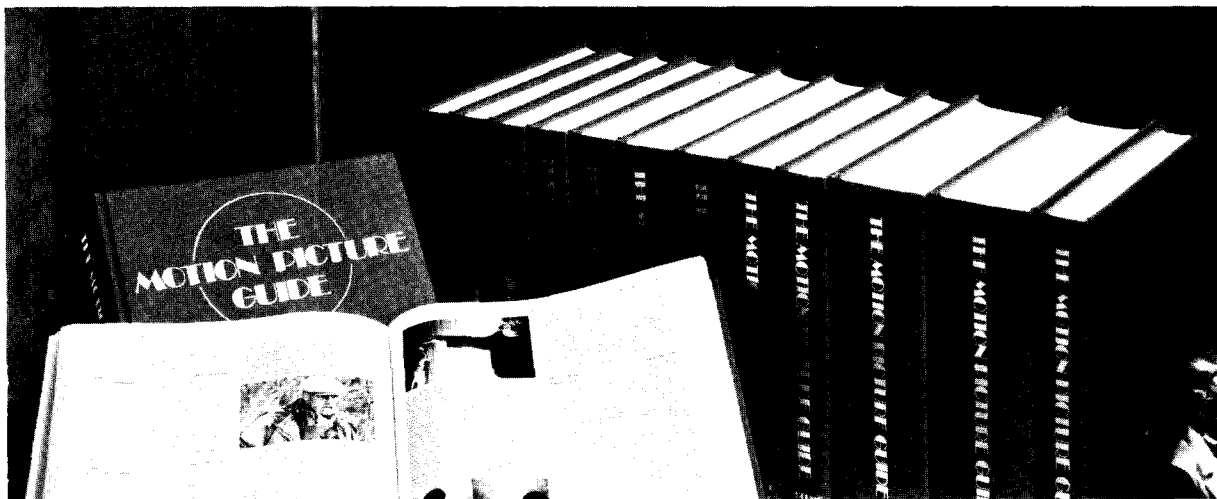
Again, de Man's infrequent remarks on the "Jewish problem," though ugly

and prejudiced, are mild compared with the vicious anti-Semitic propaganda that flourished in Nazi-funded papers like *L'Ami du Peuple* ("Friend of the People"). What is especially grievous, however, is that de Man continued an association with overtly anti-Semitic and collaborationist newspapers to the end of 1942—well past the time when all but the deliberately ignorant would have known that the persecution of the Belgian Jews, begun before the end of 1940, had taken a drastic turn. The so-called "spontaneous" Flemish action of April 1941, in which two synagogues were sacked and burned *Kristallnacht*-style, should have made the seriousness of the situation clear. More catastrophically, the wearing of the Yellow Star was enforced in June 1942; and only weeks later, in August, systematic deportations began. Ten thousand Jews were rounded up in Belgium that month. The "Asiatics" were sent East, that is, to their death in Auschwitz; an ideological figure of speech became literal and lethal.

It is hard to be dispassionate about de Man's conduct, given the anti-Semitic campaign in which *Le Soir* participated from the fall of 1940 on, and the tragic history of the persecution, and the final deportation, of Belgium's Jews. (They made up one percent of the country's population but accounted for a third of its civilian and military casualties.) It remains important, however, to place oneself into that era, into its motives and its attitudes. What role did anti-Semitism play in de Man's thought? His articles reveal a strong sympathy for the Flemish, who lost their independence in Napoleon's wars and their territorial integrity in 1830. A cultural nationalist, de Man believed in the "genius" or the "individual soul" of a people, in their "unanimity" as it was attested by a shared language, a homeland, and an ancestral achievement. (These qualities somehow did not apply to the Jews; they were seen as a "ghostly anti-race," in J. L. Talmon's memorable phrase.) De Man's focus is on the "New Europe" under Nazi domination, a Europe that allowed this Flemish sympathizer to take his distance from French culture and turn toward the German sphere of influence.

Nothing in this common sort of nationalism had to result in anti-Semitism. Was it youthful inexperience, then, or a broader acceptance of fascist ideology that made de Man write an anti-Semitic piece? The Dutch historian Johann Huizinga also acknowledged cultural (though not

Geoffrey Hartman teaches English and comparative literature at Yale University.



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racial) differences between Latin, German, Anglo-Saxon, and Slavic "types," and published two books, one as early as 1934 and the other as late as 1943, that look toward Europe's renewal. Yet Hui-zinga refused to accept the claim that "*am deutschen Wesen wird die Welt genesen*" ("the Germanic essence will cure the World").

IN RECENT YEARS the study of fascist thought has gradually come into its own. George Mosse and Zev Sternhell in particular have made essential contributions. The appeal of a movement that drew significant authors into its ranks came in part from what Mosse calls its "open-endedness . . . its ideological fluidity under authoritarian leadership." Besides the sad and demented case of Ezra Pound, and the passing enthusiasm for Mussolini of such figures as W. B. Yeats and Emil Ludwig, there was a large group of fascist intellectuals active in France and Belgium. They were militant journalists and included some prestigious writers of very different character: Maurice Blanchot, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Céline, Thierry Maulnier (the proponent of "rational anti-Semitism"), Robert Brasillach, Drieu de la Rochelle (who became editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* during the Occupation), Robert Poulet, and Henri de Man (who was Paul de Man's uncle).

In Belgium, at the end of April 1940, the cultural and linguistic strife between Flemish and Francophone factions was so intense that only two weeks before the German invasion the Belgian government almost fell because of a conflict over bilingualism. Closely tied to these divided national feelings were the collaborationist careers of Robert Poulet and Henri de Man.

Poulet, who initially supported strict neutrality for Belgium in the European conflict, agreed in October 1940 to become editor in chief and political director of the *Nouveau Journal*, an important Francophone publication. He accepted Nazi control in Europe and actively encouraged the war against Russia, while seeking to form a single political party for the French-speaking provinces of Belgium. Henri de Man, after the Germans occupied Belgium, dissolved the Labor Party that he headed, declaring that the European collapse was a deliverance rather than a disaster because "Sovereignty of Labor" could now be realized within the framework of the New Order. The old and decrepit parliamentary democracy would be replaced by a single

party in a "movement of national resurrection" encompassing "all the vital forces of the nation." Poulet was condemned to death after the Liberation but the sentence was not carried out; he continued to write against the bourgeoisie, and against the injustice of which he deemed himself the victim. Henri de Man failed to form his single Flanders-oriented party comprising both labor and capital, retreated in 1941 to the Alps, was condemned in absentia, and finished his life composing versions of his autobiography.

HIS NEPHEW'S journalism stands out by its refusal to engage directly with political matters. But its sympathies are clearly with Germany, and its cultural politics must have furthered the cause of collaboration. Reporting in March 1941 on the first reactions of literary France to the defeat, de Man combines a dig at French intellectuals with a revealing comment about the laggard masses:

The French are not yet used to the idea that the creation of a new world organization no longer depends on them. . . . The lucidity of some [French] writers when they condemn a nefarious regime, and their determination to launch themselves on new paths, is certainly a comforting symptom. But so long as this does not express itself unanimously in public opinion, it is at least premature to talk about a national revival.

Such "unanimity" between a nation and its leaders was stressed by fascist intellectuals. And in another article de Man moved closer to being explicitly collaborationist, when he claimed that Hitler brought about the "definite emancipation of a people called upon to exercise, in its turn, a hegemony in Europe."

De Man reviewed the work of several fascist thinkers, including Drieu, Brasillach, and Ernst Jünger. His relation to fascist ideology is not a simple matter. There is, clearly, an accommodation, but it remains very general, without recourse to the usual "virile" invective. To judge from his articles, de Man felt he was living in a revolutionary epoch, in which politics and a sense of collective action were an essential part of intellectual regeneration. Political militance was displacing the *douceur* of the arts—or rather, as Walter Benjamin (and not Paul de Man) saw so clearly, it was aestheticizing politics for the masses. Still, with respect to the arts an admirable inconsistency crops up: not only is de Man a supporter of modern literature (including Kafka), but he resists its political co-

ordination. He praises Poulet for a novel that does not subordinate "artistic sincerity" to political imperatives. And in defense of the literary review *Messages* (which he may have helped to get published), de Man explicitly rejects any "brutal" targeting of art, "under the pretext that the present revolution is totalitarian . . . that it intends to modify all aspects of personal and collective existence." In most other respects, however, de Man's themes are conformist: the renewal of Europe, the worth and dignity of national cultures, the need for roots, the spiritual unity of state and individual, of collectivity and elite.

WHETHER de Man's anti-Semitic strain was conventional or an ideological reflex does not much matter. The argument he makes presupposes a claim that efforts to emancipate the Jews had only proved that they could not be assimilated. They could adapt, to be sure, but that was only a dangerous disguise: they remained racially, essentially, a foreign body in the state. Henri de Man wrote in 1941 that he had been convinced for a long time of the need to eliminate "from our political organism the foreign body constituted by all the residues or embryos of the Ghetto." This conviction could attach itself to a time-honored popular and Christian hatred that regarded the Jews as unspiritual (materialistic) enemies of the faith, as doomed and eternal outsiders. The Jewish intellectual in particular was regarded as free-floating, cynical, subversive. The great scholar E. R. Curtius, neither a Nazi nor an anti-Semite, wrote in 1932: "We do not fight Judaism but *Destruktion* [roughly: a radical questioning of traditional structures, a kind of early stage on the way to deconstruction], not a race but a negation. . . . Our Jews, it must regretfully be said, for the greater part and in their significant activity, are self-devoted to skepticism and *Destruktion*."

I have found only one other prejudicial reference to Jews by de Man. It occurs in a discussion of Jünger and contemporary German fiction. De Man posits a proper tradition of German art, which is marked by "deep spiritual sincerity," and then a second strain, which abused the remarkable theses of German expressionism. It is not surprising, he writes, that those who went in the other direction, which he qualifies as "aberrant," and a "degeneration," "were mainly non-German, specifically Jews." Such a judgment about the degeneracy

of expressionism, and about its link to the Jews, paralleled Nazi pronouncements. The bases of de Man's cultural anti-Semitism, however, are not all that different from T. S. Eliot's: the Jews do not fit into Christian culture (Eliot) or into the "content of the European idea" (de Man).

THE DESTRUCTION of European Jewry, abetted by such propaganda, is what de Man himself must have faced later, what every person with a past of this kind must face. It is also what a person like myself must face, for a different reason. Paul de Man and I were acquainted with each other since 1961, and became colleagues and friends in 1965. There was no trace of anti-Semitism in the de Man I knew. But I cannot ignore these expressions of anti-Jewish sentiment, even if they remained polite, even if they were limited to suave cultural essays and never spilled over into exhortatory rhetoric or demagoguery.

It is indeed hard to associate the young journalist (aged 21) with the distinguished theorist (aged 47) who wrote so critically, and so effectively, against Husserl's *The Crisis of European Humanity and Philosophy*. De Man accused Husserl of blindly privileging Western civilization ("European supremacy") at the very time (1935) that Europe "was about to destroy itself as center in the name of an unwarranted claim to be the center." But of de Man, too, it can now be said that "as a European it seems that [he] escaped from the necessary self-criticism that is prior to all philosophical truth about the self."

The discovery of these early articles must make a difference in the way we read the later de Man. The new disclosures imbed a biographical fact in our consciousness, a fact that tends to devour all other considerations; it does not spare the later achievement, whose intellectual power we continue to feel. One crucial and hurtful problem is that de Man did not address his past. We do not have his thoughts. Did he avoid confession (he was without a religious bone in his body, except for the subdued religious feelings that were still perceptible in his early enthusiastic emphasis on the *âme particulière* of nationalities), and instead work out his totalitarian temptation in a purely intellectual and impersonal manner?

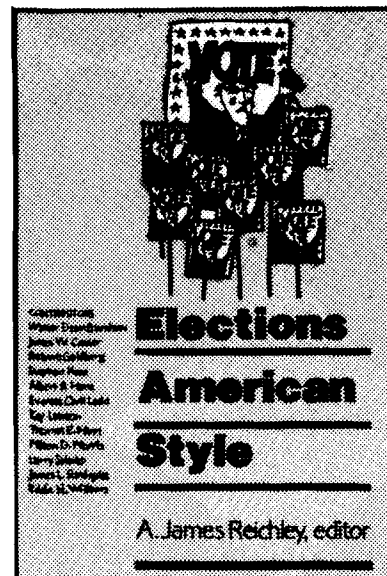
One view of the impact of these disclosures on the reading of de Man has already surfaced. Those previously suspicious of deconstruction have seized on

the revelations. Their sense of deconstruction as morally unsound and politically evasive seems to stand confirmed. They condemn it as untrustworthy because it seeks to avert the reality, and therefore the culpability, of error. That is how they interpret deconstruction's emphasis on the indeterminacy of meaning, and on the complexity of a medium that seems to "speak" us instead of submitting fully to our control.

SUCH A judgment is superficial, and divorces deconstruction from its context in the history of philosophy. We may argue about whether deconstruction yields a useful way of looking at the relation of language and meaning, but it takes up an age-old problem. Ernst Cassirer observed that while language wished to overcome "the curse of mediocrity," it was itself part of the problem it tried to resolve. Our methods and our media of inquiry distance the truth we seek: we get trapped in epistemological, semantic, and interpretive hassles. And one result of this perplexing byproduct of our effort to clarify things has been that philosophy has often turned against slippery modes of expression in the name of scientific rigor. Blame is placed squarely on the figurative, or literary, uses of language. "No metaphor is good unless it is a dead metaphor."

Deconstruction is, in this respect, a defense of literature. It shows, by close reading, (1) that there are no dead metaphors, (2) that literature is often more self-aware than those who attack it, (3) that literary texts contain significant tensions that can be disclosed, but not resolved, by analysis. Any mode of analysis, therefore, that sees the text as an organic unity, or uses it for a totalizing purpose (as when the right or the left speaks for history), is blind, and the text itself will subvert or "deconstruct" such closures.

Within the history of thought, deconstruction is surely a significant critique of German idealism ("identity philosophy"), insofar as the latter resulted in various kinds of organicism, including fascism. De Man in particular moved away from such speculative politics. His position is the very opposite of an idealism that confuses intellect and action, ideology and political praxis. His emphasis, moreover, on the non-identity of these realms, on the asymmetry of the real and the ideal, does not result in a spiritualistic or nihilistic withdrawal, tempting to many whose God has failed.



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Deconstruction is neither nihilistic nor cynical when it questions whether there exists an arena for testing ideas other than the uncontrollable arena of activist politics; or when it demonstrates that philosophy and literature express the impasse from which ideas spring, as well as those ideas themselves.

THE PROBITY of the Paul de Man we knew, and his powerful analytic talent, must remain our focus. What is neglected by de Man's critics, who are in danger of reducing all to biography again, is the intellectual power in his later work, the sheer power of critique, whatever its source, that he deploys against the claims of philosophy and theory. (The only peculiar thing is that a philosophical mind of this caliber should turn against the pretensions of philosophy and toward literature.) What is harder to appreciate, however, is the standpoint from which de Man's critique was launched. In addition to the power of deconstructive reasoning, there is its purity: it does not reveal, not in de Man at least, its situatedness, its personal or ideological context. The method acts as if it had no relatives. To my mind, it is this purity of deconstructive thought, not its power, that can now be questioned.

Again, there is nothing of a confessional nature in de Man; but it may yet turn out that in the later essays we glimpse the fragments of a great confession. It is possible to link the intellectual strength of the later work to what is excluded by it, to what, in surging back, threatens to diminish its authority. Those who see a "flight from history" in de Man—and link it directly to what we know now of his early writing—are quite wrong. It is true that he does not place himself in historical context, and he should have done so. But the postwar writing may constitute an avowal of error, a kind of repudiation in its very methodology of a philosophy of reading.

De Man always asks us to look beyond natural experience or its mimesis to a specifically linguistic dilemma. He claims that the relation between meaning and language is not in our subjective control, perhaps not even human:

The way in which I can try to mean is dependent on the linguistic properties that are not only not made by me, because I depend on the language as it exists for the devices which I will be using, it is as such not made by us as historical beings, it is perhaps not even made by humans at all. Benjamin

says, from the beginning, that it is not at all certain that language is in any sense human.

This is interesting and scandalous, since by "not human" de Man (interpreting Benjamin, the German Jewish critic who committed suicide in 1940 while fleeing the Nazis) certainly does not mean divine, as if language were instituted by God. If language were God-given, there would surely be stability; but there is stability only insofar as language is purified of ordinary referential meaning and becomes pure speech, as in ritual or magic, or when we recite something by heart without attending to its meaning. According to de Man, we are always encountering epistemological or semantic instabilities, the incompatibility or disjunction between meaning and intent, or between what is stated and the rhetoric or mode of stating it.

DE MAN CONCLUDES that the language-meaning relationship is not a stable, mutual reflection or correspondence, as when sound reinforces sense, or when history seems to fall into a genealogical and progressive pattern. Oscar Wilde depreciated action in favor of imagination because action was "a thing incomplete in its essence, because limited by accident, and ignorant of its direction, being always at variance with its aim." But for de Man, this description of action is also a description of what cannot be overcome by art, even the most imaginative kind. There is no compensation for the failure of action in the perfection of art. The fields of critical philosophy, literary theory, and history have an interlinguistic, not an extralinguistic, correlative; they are secondary in relation to the original, which is itself a previous text. They reveal an essential failure or disarticulation, which was already there in the original. "They kill the original, by discovering that the original was already dead. They read the original from the perspective of pure language [*reine Sprache*], a language that would be entirely freed of the illusion of meaning."

This talk of killing the original, and of essential failure, is strong stuff. Knowing today about the writings of the young de Man, it is not possible to evade them as merely a biographical reference point: the early writing is an "original" to which the later writing reacts. De Man's method of reading implies that the relation between late and early is interlinguistic only, that the position he has abandoned, one that proved to be a fail-

ure and perhaps culpably blind, is not to be used to explain his eventual method; but the biographical disclosure may hurt de Man's intelligibility. Though his method insists on excluding the biographical ("extralinguistic") reference, I do not believe that we can read him without identifying the "original" in his case as the mediated and compromised idiom of his early, journalistic writings.

DE MAN'S ASSERTION, for example, that "What stands under indictment is language itself and not somebody's philosophical error" all of a sudden becomes a reflection by de Man on de Man. The earlier self is not off the hook, but the emphasis shifts to the way language operates. The later self acknowledges an error, yet it does not attribute it to an earlier self, to a self involved in ideas and responsible for the error, because that would perpetuate its blindness to the linguistic nature of the predicament. Such a view may have been self-serving. But according to de Man's analysis, enlightenment as such cannot resolve error, and even repeats it, if one is deluded into thinking that the new position stands in a progressive and sounder relation to language, that it has corrected a historical mistake once and for all. Even to say, quite simply, "I was young, I made a mistake, I've changed my mind" remains blind if it overlooks the narrative shape of this or any confession.

What is at issue is the character of self-analysis. De Man's notorious example is Rousseau. In *Allegories of Reading* he proposed that autobiography, as it was invented or modernized by Rousseau, is built on self-accusations that allow the writer to write, that is, to excuse himself, and to extend these excuses into a narrative web. It is as if de Man (so we can remark now) feared that writing would always be implicated in such an effort of exculpation. He argued that the sequence of writing, exculpation, self, occurs even where there is no discernable fault or error. It originates that original fault, and with it a false genealogy or continuity based on the self. De Man rejects the "pathos of history," including personal history, and insists (in his essay on Benjamin, written at a time of considerable physical suffering) on a suffering that is "specifically linguistic." This linguistic "pathos," he says, must not be confused with an "elegiac gesture, by which one looks back on the past as a period that is lost, which then gives you the hope of another future that might occur."

The personal history behind this passage was hidden to us, but now we can see more clearly de Man's attitude toward his past. He places himself beyond nostalgia, yet he does not say that the past can be overcome. Germans still talk of the Nazi era as a "past that will not pass away," that resists being worked through. De Man does not mention the exceptional Nazi years, and that is an evasion; but he makes a general statement that to mourn the past as lost in order to guarantee ourselves an unencumbered future will not succeed. There cannot be, he suggests, a future that will not prove to have been a past like that. His essay on Benjamin envisages a temporal repetition that subverts the hope in new beginnings, in a New Era: it subverts a hope, ultimately messianic, that always revives. (The political culture he championed in the *Le Soir* articles, a culture that claimed to be modern and revolutionary, was based on such a hope.) "Linguistic pathos," as opposed to personal or historical pathos, is the painful knowledge that he had been trapped by an effect of language, an ideological verbiage that blinded critical reflection. The only activity that escapes the immediate ideological pressure is art itself, whose deeper tradition de Man often cites as able to resist the pressures of

the purely contemporary (*l'ingérence de l'actualité*).

We can accuse de Man of lacking foresight or civil courage, or of underestimating the ruthlessness of the Nazi regime. And we abhor the anti-Semitism, and any collaboration that occurred. Once again we feel betrayed by the intellectuals. The accusations we bring, however, are a warning to ourselves. They do not justify complacency or easy judgments about the relation of political ideas to moral conduct. Many on the left also welcomed what Kenneth Burke called "sinister unifying," and succumbed to xenophobic and anti-Jewish sentiment. De Man's "dirty secret" was the dirty secret of a good part of civilized Europe. In the light of what we now know, however, his work appears more and more as a deepening reflection on the rhetoric of totalitarianism. His turn from the politics of culture to the language of art was not an escape into, but an escape out of, aestheticism: a disenchantment with that fatal aestheticizing of politics, blatant in his own early articles, that gave fascism its false brilliance. De Man's critique of every tendency to totalize literature or language, to see unity where there is no unity, looks like a belated, but still powerful, act of conscience.

THE FIXER

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tury, he grew up in the Progressive era, when it was assumed that men of good sense and broad perspective could rise above the rapacity of big business and the corruption of politics to lead the nation toward greatness. His was the vision of a confident, powerful, assertive, expansive government that would function as the senior partner of corporate America. Berle the man was as assertive and expansive (and arrogant) as the government he envisaged. In his many writings and in his numerous public activities, he represented an American liberalism that was as idealistic as it was grandiose.

JORDAN A. SCHWARZ provides a detailed and well-documented look at Berle's life, from his intellectually precocious childhood to his ornery old age. Pushed by an ambitious and imperious father, Berle entered Harvard College at the age of 14, graduated with honors from Harvard Law School, promptly and presumptuously became an adviser at the Paris peace talks after World War I, practiced law and lectured on corporate finance, and then in 1932 collaborated with a young economist named Gardiner Means to write a book that shook the nation, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*. By that time America was mired in economic depression, Hoover and the Republican champions of Wall Street were on the run, and America wanted to understand what had happened and what to do about it.

Most of Berle and Means's book was dry, filled with lawyer's arguments and economist's data; but taken as a whole it told a tantalizing tale about the increasing concentration of American economic power in the hands of a relatively few giant corporations and their managers, who were accountable neither to their shareholders nor to the public at large. The authors concluded by demanding that "the modern corporation serve not alone the owners or the [managers] but all the society." The federal government must rein in unbridled captains of industry and put the modern corporation to work for the nation. Neither laissez-faire nor socialism was the answer. The answer was to be found in a partnership between business and government, in which government had the senior role. Although few people ever read the book (in its first 20 years only 35,000 copies were sold), *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* became, in the indubitable words of *Time* magazine in the spring of 1933, the "economic bible

of the Roosevelt administration."

Berle had been drawn into Franklin D. Roosevelt's "brain trust" even before the election. His ideas and his influence were evident during the campaign, especially in FDR's notable Commonwealth Club speech, given in San Francisco in the fall of 1932. Reviewing the history of the American economy, Roosevelt pointed out that "in many instances the victory of the central Government was a haven of refuge to the individual." Hoover's protective tariffs and government loans had benefited big business at the expense of the individual. Wealth in America was far more concentrated now in 1932 than it had been in 1912. Roosevelt then described the nation's challenge in words that echoed Berle:

Our task now is not discovery or exploitation of natural resources, or necessarily producing more goods. It is the soberer, less dramatic business of administering resources and plants already in hand, of seeking to re-establish foreign markets for our surplus production, of meeting the problem of underconsumption, of adjusting production to consumption, of distributing wealth and products more equitably, of adapting existing economic organizations to the service of the people. The day of enlightened administration has come. . . . [We should not] abandon the principle of strong economic units, merely because their power is susceptible of easy abuse. . . . Today we are modifying and controlling our economic units.

AS SCHWARZ deftly shows, it was to this job—of modifying and controlling economic units through enlightened administration—that Berle turned with relish. Berle's prescriptions for the federal regulation of securities became the Securities and Exchange Act. His influence was felt in the creation of the National Recovery Administration and in the Temporary National Economic Committee hearings later in the decade. He argued for a branch banking act, for the coordination of all federal credit agencies such as home loan banks, for the consolidation of railroads, for a federal incorporation act, for a national program of sickness and unemployment compensation, for a public-works finance corporation. In much of this, he was prescient. He urged that "women performing equal tasks receive an equal income . . . a field we have not yet entered but it is plainly foreshadowed by the modifications going on."

For the next three decades Berle hopped from office to office, from pro-

ject to project, like a gourmet cook in a soup kitchen, stirring pots, bringing issues to a boil, advising and scolding lesser mortals, everywhere imperious and often insufferable. No sooner had the New Deal been launched than he left it to become an adviser to Fiorello La Guardia, then mayor of New York during one of the city's periodic financial crises. There he took the role Felix Rohatyn was to play four decades later, devising financial schemes to save the city and then without undue modesty accepting the credit for having done so. Then back to Washington as a State Department assistant secretary, running Latin American affairs, dabbling in civil aviation, working on a host of other weighty matters. Then to Brazil as ambassador. Then back to New York, and so on, continuing through the Kennedy administration, in which he was briefly in charge of a task force on Latin America.

BERLE'S PATTERN was to set himself up as a fount of ideas, but to leave the work of implementation to others—and then to fulminate over how badly his ideas were handled. He bruised egos wherever he went, and his short tenure in any single job was as much a function of others' impatience with him as of his impatience with everyone else. It never occurred to him that policy-making was inseparable from implementation, that "good" policies that could not be administered well were probably bad policies to begin with. For those who worked with Berle, "enlightened administration" was synonymous with arrogance.

There was an arrogance, too, in Berle's ambitions for America. He espoused a foreign policy intellectually consistent with his view of government's purpose and role in the nation. Just as Americans needed a strong central government to liberate them from the predations of giant corporations, nation-states needed powerful international institutions to liberate them from the scourges of colonialism, 19th-century imperialism, and then—after World War II—from international communism. In the absence of powerful international institutions, however, the job of ensuring national self-determination naturally fell to America. As Schwarz shows, Berle never came to terms with the possibility that America-as-global-policeman would exercise imperial power itself. He was certain that no state would willingly become communist; where communism

existed, he assumed that it had to be imposed from the outside.

Then Cuba turned communist, and revolution threatened in other Latin American nations. Berle urged American intervention. Years later he was an advocate of America's role in Vietnam, and in 1969 he described an anti-war strike at Harvard as directed by "a small group of organizers working primarily as political warfare agents for Maoist communism." Berle's rhetoric became more strident. In the end, he disavowed his earlier commitment to self-determination in favor of communist containment. Berle the Progressive liberal ended his days as Berle the anti-communist curmudgeon.

Schwarz gives us a fascinating and detailed portrait of the man, but he fails to place Berle's ideas in their historical context, or to help us understand their significance for modern economic liberalism. In fact, Berle's vision of a powerful national government, guiding American industry and protecting individual rights, was the direct descendant of that of Herbert Croly. Croly became the first editor of *THE NEW REPUBLIC* during its visionary days before World War I. Almost a quarter century before Berle and Means produced their tome, he had of-

fered in *The Promise of American Life* a stinging critique of the reformers' infatuation with trust-busting.

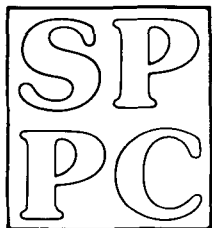
Foreshadowing Berle, Croly argued that big businesses "contributed to American economic efficiency," and that civilized society should aim, therefore, to substitute cooperation for competition. Corporations should be able to fulfill their "natural" growth, so long as federal powers were used to bind their activities to the national interest. And wielding these new federal powers were to be wise public leaders free from selfish interest. What was needed, said Croly, was a "New Nationalism" to direct individual efforts away from selfish pursuits, toward collective solutions to the nation's problems. This was the logic of Alexander Hamilton applied to an industrial America.

Theodore Roosevelt took up Croly's ideas and placed them at the center of his 1912 Bull Moose platform, in opposition to Woodrow Wilson's call for stricter antitrust enforcement. These two visions of reform—a cooperative system of national planning, or a competitive system of atomized economic units umpired by trustbusters—faintly echoed the Hamilton-Jefferson debate. But this was

also a completely new discussion about the role of private power in an industrialized economy, and its terms were to guide subsequent liberal debates. Two decades later Berle offered his generation a forceful restatement of Croly's position, and he spent much of his intellectual life battling with those on the other side—Felix Frankfurter, Benjamin Cohen, Thurmond Arnold—who shared the Wilsonian view.

The New Deal never resolved the liberal debate. To the end, the planners and the atomizers fought one another for control of the ideological agenda. The National Recovery Administration marked the high water mark of the planners; Arnold's reign at the Justice Department, of the atomizers. Nor has the debate been resolved since.

How should the economy be reorganized, and who should do the organizing? Liberals have never come up with a coherent answer. The problem with the liberal planners' vision has always been arrogance. How are the planners to know what the economy needs or in what direction it should move? How can the public be assured of their knowledge and impartiality? The problem with the liberal atomizer's vision has always been sentiment-



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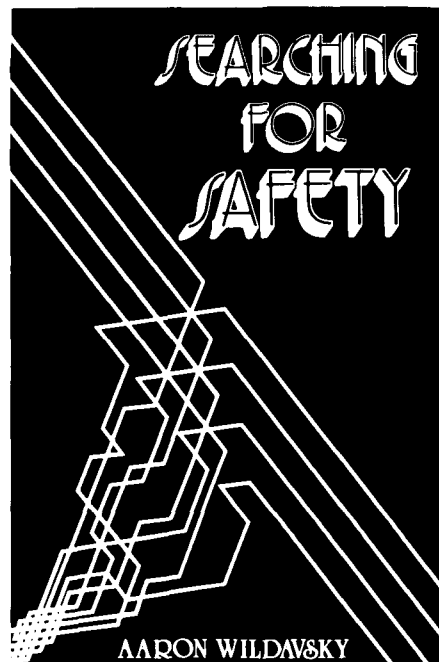
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tality and naïveté. How can a complex industrial economy function with only small businesses and dispersed sources of capital? Is there, as a practical matter, really such a thing as a free market?

Liberals have tended to forget the debate when times are good, and then indulge in it once again when the economy is threatened. The labels may change and the prescriptions may differ in specifics, but the underlying controversy survives. In this decade, for example, some have argued with force that America needs an explicit industrial policy to encourage older industries to reduce outmoded technologies, to channel research and development funds into emerging industries, to help workers retrain. Otherwise, the necessary shifts in the nation's industrial base would come more slowly and be more painful, and in the meantime the United States would have lost out to other nations that had made the transition more smoothly (notably Japan). These arguments have been greeted by the predictable Wilsonian response—recently emanating from such august liberal enclaves as the Brookings Institution—that all we need do is maintain

competitive markets and the economy will fix itself.

The two views battled for Walter Mondale's allegiance during the 1984 presidential campaign. Neither prevailed. Nor did Mondale. Liberals were again in disarray over how the economy should be organized, until the ensuing recovery seemed to render the problem irrelevant. And through it all, conservatives have sounded like Wilsonian liberals but acted like planners. Herbert Hoover as secretary of commerce in the Coolidge administration, and then as president, rhapsodized over the wonders of the free market, but he suspended anti-trust enforcement and proceeded to organize American business into powerful trade associations to plan industrial growth with the "cooperation" of the federal government. Sixty years later, Ronald Reagan waxed equally enthusiastic over the magic of the market and the heroism of entrepreneurs, but followed Hoover's well-worn path toward business planning.

IT SHOULD BE noted that Reagan's plan to shrink old-line basic industries—forcing radical cuts in employment and wage concessions, busting the unions—has been quite successful. Standardized goods such as steel, autos, textiles, commodity chemicals, and others that rest on mass or large-batch production are particularly vulnerable to price competition. Thus the easiest way to reduce their size was to increase their prices in world markets, making it difficult for them to be exported and making it relatively easy for foreign producers to threaten them at home. And the fastest way to increase their price was to raise the value of the dollar by keeping interest rates high. Presto: the industries were forced to contract. Between 1981 and 1985, as the value of the dollar soared, some two million jobs were lost in old-line manufacturing businesses. Membership in industrial unions shrank dramatically. Steel, autos, and others were forced to reduce domestic capacity, set up operations abroad, and diversify into specialized niches. By the time the dollar started to decline, old industrial America was a pale shadow of its former self.

Reagan's plan to promote high technology has been equally ambitious. Since 1981 about \$600 billion has been channeled into new weapons, most depending on advanced technologies. This demand for state-of-the-art products has pulled these emerging industries

down the learning curve to the point where commercial spin-offs are attainable. By the mid-1980s well over 50 percent of all the research and development funding for America's high-tech industries was coming directly from the Pentagon. In 1987 the Pentagon launched a major effort to develop practical applications for "superconductors," special alloys that lose all resistance to the flow of electric current when cooled; it agreed to fund Sematech, a research joint venture comprising America's leading semiconductor manufacturers, designed to improve their competitiveness; and the National Security Agency poured money into "parallel processing," the most advanced computer architecture, which may produce the fastest computers in the world. The Strategic Defense Initiative is aiming to extend the frontiers of lasers, fiber optics, new materials, and computer technologies into the 21st century.

Viewed as a whole, Reagan's economic policy and military buildup have constituted an extraordinarily ambitious plan for shifting America's industrial base. This has been planning with a vengeance. But because Reagan is an avowed defender of the free market from the depredations of big government, there have been few voices to his right denouncing Washington's vulgar intrusion into the temple of the marketplace. As only Richard Nixon could open relations with Beijing, so only Ronald Reagan (and Hoover) could make economic planning respectable. But there are important differences between conservative planning and liberal planning. The former is done far more quietly, and it tends to be run by large corporations and Wall Street. Neither Hoover's trade associations nor Reagan's Federal Reserve Board and Pentagon are exemplars of open, democratic accountability. Conservative planning also has an uncanny way of making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Were he alive today, Adolf Berle would be incensed at the hypocrisy of the present planning system and dismayed at the cynicism with which the public has come to view the federal government. But he would not sit back and stew. He would, no doubt, get on the phone to his favorite Democratic candidate and presumptuously instruct him to tell the American people exactly what is happening.

ROSALIE

My pretty cousin, the hairdresser,
died at thirty, her belly
bigger than a prize pumpkin

but not with anything welcome
on earth: she twisted because
she wanted the thing lifted out

of her, but it was heavier
than she was and more securely
hers than she was the world's:

she said waking up from the shots
the scriptures were
true because she'd just seen

paradise:
I'd ridden my bicycle over to see
her, frogs clunking in along

the brimming ditches by
the pinewoods, green stuff
piling up scumfloats

on the marsh water, and I thought
how fine paradise must be:
for her anything earthless would do.

A. R. AMMONS

ROBERT B. REICH

HEARTS AND RIGHTS

Another Liberalism Romanticism and the Reconstruction of Liberal Thought by Nancy Rosenblum

(Harvard University Press, 225 pp., \$25)

Another liberalism? One is tempted to wonder whether we don't already have enough of them. Happily, by the last section of the book, the panic subsides. Rosenblum's "other" liberalism is in essentials a familiar one: pluralist, rights-based, Millite. Only this time, she intends to "reconstruct" it by placing a new stress on the needs and even passions of the postmodern individual.

It is not exactly a stirring justification for the effort. Indeed, a renewal of Mill—even with the Bentham taken out and the Coleridge put firmly back in—would be banal were it not for the battering liberal theory has taken during the last decade or so. Since John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* was given the imprimatur as the classic text of contemporary liberalism in the mid-'70s, powerful and resilient attacks have been launched on it. They have come from two quarters, one familiar, one unexpected. Rosenblum's liberalism is a response to the blows.

The discussions of Rawls most common in public debate focused on his arguments about the morality of the welfare state. But the academic argument has centered on something much more fundamental: Rawls's claim that there exists an "overlapping consensus" in the conscience of modern Western society about the existence—and moral force—of individual rights as prior to any conception of social goods. Rawls argues that these goods—religious uniformity, standards of public morality, a universal draft, and the like—have to cede to the moral priority of individual rights if one is to "take seriously the distinction between persons." This is not just an empirical claim, but a moral one too, about the priority of the individual to the society in which he or she happens to be born and about a doctrine of "fairness" that results from that.

The first attack on this came predictably from the right. Conservatives—the most interesting of whom were influenced by the work of Leo Strauss—assaulted the Rawlsian consensus first empirically and then philosophically. They questioned whether an "overlapping

consensus" about moral rights existed at all. They pointed rather to the much more reliable lack of moral consensus in liberal society, and to the still powerful presence of personal selfishness. And they gave an alternative reading of liberal society that had a certain smack of recognition for chastened '80s students. They argued that the liberal contract of the modern state by which rights are secured and duties incurred was not one of moral parable but one of coercion, of necessity and force. Liberal society is moral, they maintained, only in the basest sense: it protects life and property. It has no intrinsic logic of cultural or political progress and rests on a necessity that no amount of argument about "fairness" or "overlapping consensus" can alter. On this reading, "fairness" is replaced by a realism that harbors few illusions about justice, little affection for liberalism as a progressive force, no passion for the Millite project.

But the second attack on Rawlsian liberalism—the "communitarian" critique—emerged from within the liberal camp itself. More morally palatable (if less intellectually challenging) than the first attack, its language of "community" and "commitment" had an impeccably New Left pedigree. Perhaps for these reasons, it earned more attention on American campuses and may yet have more impact on the American polity than its conservative bedfellow. Abjuring Hobbes and Machiavelli as the founders of the liberal state, it appealed to the idealism of the academic left and, on a broader level, to the sentimentalism of Americans as a whole.

The irony was that this attack was more profoundly anti-liberal in its epistemology and in its political implications than even the neo-Hobbesian onslaught. Whereas the conservative realists clung to "rights" and merely questioned their a priori, moral force, communitarians shelved the concept of rights altogether. They argued that the idea of a rights-bearing individual as prior to society and independent of it was simply an abstraction, an untruth. Individuals were created

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in part by the society in which they live, and their rights cannot be separated from the community that gave them birth. Rather than talking about near-meaningless "rights," they urged liberals to concentrate on social goods, called in the shorthand of political theory "the good." The primary political issue was not whose rights we should protect, but what kind of society we wanted to create, what kind of citizens would eventually result. Rights existed as part of this common good, but only insofar as they were a subdivision of the good.

Communitarians, then, differed from the conservative realists in that they attacked Rawlsian liberalism not because it was too moral, but because it was too abstract. The communitarian alternative was not a level-headed acceptance of political coercion, but a rooting of a new moral self in the community that supported it. Their reply to those who pointed out the impossibility of constructing a unified "good" in a post-Enlightenment Western society was that at least the *argument* about the good should be the determining political principle in public debate and, in some as yet unspecified sense, actually replace the elusive "good" itself.

INTO THIS tangle Rosenblum wades. Her other liberalism is a defense of individualist liberalism against both the realist right and the communitarian left. For that reason, it marks a significant first step on the path to a liberal resuscitation, on both the theoretical and political level. But it is perhaps a symptom of liberalism's theoretical exhaustion that Rosenblum's instrument of renewal is what has long been regarded as the enemy of liberal rationalism: Romanticism. Romanticism is deployed against the cynicism of the neo-Hobbesians by showing how liberal society has spawned rich, new sources of personal satisfaction to replace the lost unity of the premodern state and to disguise the coercion of liberal order. Romanticism is then used against the communitarians to show that only liberalism, with its attachment to rights over the good, creates the space for the genuinely free associations of community to which communitarianism aspires. Another liberalism, in other words, can avoid both conservative aridity and communitarian illiberalism. To use Rosenblum's strained epithet, it can make liberalism "lovely" again.

The cleverness of the Romantic tack is best revealed in its appeal to the realists.

Typically understood as a reaction to the barrenness of liberalism, Romanticism is instead reinterpreted by Rosenblum as a product of it. Romantic "heroic individuality," its impulse toward nature, its expressive embrace of paradox and defeat, are seen as impossible without the loss of accepted social meaning, of the unified "good," that the liberal state ushered in. In this way the conservative emphasis on the empty, coercive center of liberalism can be supplemented by a Romantic revolt against it. The "good" may be gone, but Romanticism—the sudden recognition of loss—turns the regret into a satisfying form of self-expression. A cure for *gemeinschaft*-envy.

THIS ARGUMENT about the intrinsic relationship between liberalism and Romantic revolt has great resonance, largely because it has been said before, and more eloquently, by Mill. But Rosenblum adds to Mill a rich array of other voices, from Humboldt to Thoreau, each contributing to the persuasiveness of the link between Romantic satisfaction and liberal individuality. Instead of theoretical analysis, Rosenblum marshals Stendhal's Julien Sorel in *Le Rouge et le Noir* to describe a Romantic rebel against liberal modernity who would be unthinkable without the individualism that the liberal polity brought about. Even Wordsworth's pleas for alliance with Catholic Spain in *The Convention of Citra* are given liberal edge by his simultaneous demand for Romantic individuality.

Unfortunately, this appropriation of literature for the purposes of theory is not without its costs. Rosenblum's necessarily sketchy treatment of complex writers can fail to convince. She may, for example, argue long and hard for the compatibility of the English Romantics with liberalism, but the fact remains that Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge ended up creative Tories. It is indeed her oddest failing that Rosenblum shows little interest in the Tory political tradition, whose very identity was formed by the struggle to reconcile the Romantic impulses she admires with the liberalism she respects. Her treatment of *Le Rouge et le Noir* is equally unsatisfying. She may dismiss Julien's self-absorption, but she cannot fully disguise Stendhal's portrait of noble failure as a lesson in ignoble selfishness.

And Rosenblum's treatment of Julien points to a greater worry. She too swiftly dismisses the essential paradox of Romanticism: that it is attracted to the smell

of its own defeat. Its embrace of emotional, anti-rational self-realization, even self-destruction, resists the reason of politics—liberal politics most of all. And it will not be co-opted. It may have been provoked by liberalism's advance—and therefore in some sense be dependent on it—but that does not make it compatible. Wordsworth's Romanticism is less liberalism's happy consequence than a more radical symptom of liberalism's problem: its inability to attract the emotive support of its citizenry without a reconstruction of the shared social meaning that it is designed to avoid. The only genuinely Romantic option is revolt.

Rosenblum does not solve this dilemma; she salves it. What she recommends, finally, is still liberalism, but allied to a watered-down version of Romanticism, restrained in its private sphere and chastened by the knowledge that without liberal restraints it would collapse into alienation. A Romanticism, in other words, with the passion surgically removed. Her argument is both familiar and painfully logical. Liberalism's cool arguments about individual rights and communal obligations—like a mother's warning to fighting sons—are the means to that chastening. Romantics need liberalism to survive. But in this bargain, it is clear that liberalism has gotten the better deal. Without losing its essence, it has been shown not to require the dry, abstract citizens its caricaturists claim. But in the process, Romanticism confronts its surest nightmare: political accommodation, personal "success."

Rosenblum MOVES onto more convincing ground with her critique of the communitarians. She tackles them by both traditional and innovative routes. She makes the old but good liberal point that the rootedness beloved of communitarians may be a source of oppression rather than comfort: "'Embeddedness' can mean being stuck." Her argument about the complex relationship between liberalism and Romanticism chips away at the straw man of "atomized" liberalism the communitarians have at times glibly relied upon.

She also highlights a certain unreality in the polarities that are set up in political theory. Arguments that stress the supremacy of the good and those that depend on the inviolability of rights can often miss the crass question of what practical difference it really makes. It is a distortion to say that concern with individual rights necessarily undercuts pub-

lic discussion of the good. In practice, the two often fuse: defending civil rights for homosexuals or blacks, for example, is as much an argument about shared culture and shared values as about the abstract individuality of the people we are protecting. And if there is in our political culture a primacy of rights as a last resort, it is owed to the experience of the damage to the common good if these rights are ignored. Such rights, in turn, are sustained by an evolving public recognition that they form part of a communal, societal good.

Rosenblum goes on to dissect the vagueness of communitarian argument. Discussing perhaps the most lucid of them, Michael Sandel, whose *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* is a direct communitarian critique of Rawls's text, she points out that his plausible compromise about just how much the individual is the creature of the community and vice versa is at best a little trivial. In Sandel's language, the individual is somewhere between complete isolation from society and complete embeddedness in it. He is a "reflexively situated self." So what? Such a formulation—bordering as it does on platitude—entirely leaves open the central question: exactly where the line between the rights of the citizen and the claims of the community has to be drawn in real political debate. By being vague about exactly which has greater power in shaping the identity of the individual, communitarianism provides a chimerical halfway house between conservatism and liberalism and risks lapsing into rhetoric. In making political choices, liberalism assumes the individual; classical conservatism assumes the community; communitarianism dithers.

But Rosenblum's keenest insight comes in her discussion of "latent community." Many communitarians argue two contradictory points. They claim that community is the constant, overriding condition of human society, and yet at the same time mourn its imminent collapse under the weight of atomized liberalism. This paradox is explained by the assertion that community always exists at some latent level, but is not necessarily explicit in our political discourse. Communitarians—the point has been taken up by the intellectual, religious right—find themselves asserting a sort of individualist conspiracy among American elites and a concealed language of communal ties and obligations, "habits

of the heart," among the people.

If that were all the communitarians were saying, of course, the point would be trivial, even semantic. It is hard to prove, and it is compatible with liberalism anyway. But communitarians differ from other liberals in that they want to make the latent community explicit in our legal and political discourse, replacing the primacy of rights with a greater emphasis on social goods such as, say, family cohesion or class solidarity. In this way, the arguments and feelings under the surface of American life can be marshaled to change society more fruitfully than can the empty articulation of depersonalized rights. Michael Walzer is the clearest on this account. His insistence that we have to use a shared language and tradition precisely to change that tradition is a curious blend of Burkean epistemology and a radical agenda.

It is the second feature that is the most striking. Communitarians have none of Burke's confidence in the wisdom of organic social development in a free society, nor his attachment to liberty. Rather, they constantly stress the wholesome benefits of community-oriented education, and the inculcation of civic virtue. Rosenblum points out the worry

for liberalism: "Civic education and conditioned virtue conflict with liberal anti-paternalism and the ethos of independence and choice." More acutely, she highlights some loose language of both Roberto Unger and Walzer (somewhat incongruously linked) to underscore the dangers. Unger uses the term "tribal" to illustrate communitarian solidarity, and Walzer describes alienated citizens as "not traitors in the specific sense of the word." In what sense, then? And what communal education in loyalty does he have in mind?

Rosenblum's point is that latent community should remain just that, latent. The fact that it occurs at a less powerful level than the communitarians wish, she argues, is one of its virtues. Real community is intrinsically linked to human freedom; in modernity that means an alliance with pluralism. Liberalism allows for a public life: its distinction between public and private, which the communitarians want to play down, may indeed be a structural advantage for both spheres. They provide relief from, and perspective on, each other. Community without tyranny is a liberal construction.

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the communarians is a deep irritation with the relief from politics that liberal society provides. And because of that, they have yet to sense the value of the freely developing latent community—untouched, unarticulated, with no theory to sustain it—that is nestling within contemporary liberalism itself. The community, if you like, of pluralism—a social reality that conservatives have also yet to face squarely. Rosenblum touches on it with her idea that there is room for a watered-down Romanticism in the

postmodern liberal order, and with her grasp of how liberal “intermediate structures” (families, friends, even familiar strangers) can satisfy the longings communarians feel. But her argument, like any political theory, relies on an abstraction and an intellectualism that can only do partial justice to that experience—and to the quiet contentment with liberalism that social critics find inconvenient, even unfashionable, to express.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

THE TROUBLEMAKER

A Cup of Coffee with My Interrogator

by Ludvík Vaculík

translated from the Czech by George Theiner

(Readers International, distributed by Persea Books, \$14.95, \$7.95 paper)

If you ask me, I *know* that Gorbachev's hullabaloo about *glasnost* will come to nothing. It cannot come to anything. The Soviet system is a combination of feudalism, which knew no democracy, and capitalism with democracy left out. A monopoly of power cannot be reformed. Depending on the personal characteristics of the ruler, the quality of life may rise or fall—life under Alphonse the Good is a different cup of tea from life under Angela the Terrible, with John the Dim somewhere in between—but the system of absolute power remains unchanged. The sole reform possible is complete dismantling.

But the system has one interesting side effect that diehard Marxists should ponder. As they know, Marx showed how the capitalism of his day was subject to periodic crises, following one another in cycles of roughly 20 years. This cycle, predicted Marx, would get progressively shorter, until eventually capitalism would bog down in a permanent crisis that would be its death knell. While history did not move quite that way, Marx's observation has worked out nicely in the history of communism. Twenty years after the October Revolution came the deadly Party purges, and 20 years later came the Khrushchev revelations. Due to Nikita's too radical attempts at reforms, the next cycle completed itself in a

mere decade with the *Machtübernahme* by Brezhnev, whereupon it settled again into a comfortable 20-year inertia. Then came *glasnost*. I predict another abbreviated cycle.

If applied to the history of Czechoslovakia under the Communists, Marx's timetable works even better. The two-decade catamenia comes with clockwork regularity, punctuated by the cabala of years ending in an eight. In 1948 the Stalinists grabbed power. In 1968 the anti-Stalinists created a havoc followed by the Soviet ambush. By 1988 the full impact of *glasnost* will have reached neo-Stalinist Prague and the Party will throw new tantrums.

To the detached and forgetful observer, Gorbachev may appear refreshingly new. But to those who have ridden the yo-yo of Communist history, he only reminds of the doomed hopes connected with Khrushchev. If they happen to be Czechs, with a very fresh memory of what happened only 20 years ago, the “radical” speechifying of Gorbachev sounds like Russian translations of the once familiar slogans of their now retired forester, Alexander Dubček. No wonder, then, that the attitude in Prague tends to be ironic rather than enthusiastic and, more often than not, frankly cynical.

To paraphrase Schopenhauer, the history of the Soviet empire is a tragedy,

but in details it has often assumed the character of a comedy. To the clowns who are forced to act in the comedy, it is *always* a tragedy, pure and complex. Among other things, its 20-year cycles mean the loss of 20 years of life to many in each successive generation. A singer like Marta Kubišová, silenced at the peak of her art and beauty, is, after 20 years of no exposure to the public, for all practical purposes dead. So are numerous less known artists, intellectuals, and professors of literature who are now expert feeders of racing horses, and TV anchor persons from whom you can buy a beer at the bar in the St. Thomas Brewery in Prague.

“I observe all this,” writes Ludvík Vaculík about *glasnost* in *A Cup of Coffee with My Interrogator*, and he goes on:

So they again think they are better than us. And again on the basis that might is right. True, that country has needed for a long time someone to come and shake it up, and yet it's all rather sad: by the time an idea has been grasped by the Russian bureaucrat, it is hardly new where the rest of the world is concerned. . . . To manufacture quality goods: what a revolutionary and daring idea. More than one candidate to stand for election: now there's a discovery for you. . . . Independent thought, too—for how long, this time? Conscience to be your highest guide: even if it goes against the grain? . . . There are still more amazing discoveries to be made: for instance, the separation of legislative, executive, and judicial power. But whatever you may discover, just leave us alone.

Vaculík is one of those children of the Revolution whom the crazy Mother has not quite devoured—not yet anyway. His origins are impeccably working class: the son of a carpenter, he was appointed to learn shoemaking in the Bata shoe factories in Zlín (now Gottwaldov), Moravia. He joined the Party in 1945, and after a career as an educator of working-class youths, as a radio journalist, and eventually as editor of the Writers Union weekly *Literární Listy* (“Literary Papers”), he became a successful novelist and a kind of public tribune.

Vaculík stood in the limelight for the first time in 1967, when he gave a speech at the 4th Congress of the Czechoslovak Writers Union accusing the Party leadership of Antonín Novotný of failing to deliver any of the goods promised by the “revolution” in 1948. The speech led to Novotný's effort to crush the Union, by taking away its publishing facilities and putting them under direct Party control.

The effort was a flop, and only a few months later the spirit of the revolt embodied in Vaculík's philippic brought Dubček to power.

When, in the summer of 1968, under monumental pressure from Moscow, Dubček attempted to slow down the pace of the reforms, Vaculík wrote the "2,000 Words." It was a kind of populist manifesto that urged the man in the street not to wait for the completion of changes in the upper echelons of the power structure, but to come forward with initiatives "from below." In the Soviet *Black Book on Counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia* the manifesto became one of the main pretexts for invasion, and Vaculík's fate seemed to be sealed.

BY A MIRACLE—in *A Cup of Coffee with My Interrogator*, he offers an interesting explanation of the miracle—Vaculík survived, and since 1968 he has been leading the nauseating existence of a person who alternates between sitting at home editing books (he runs the samizdat enterprise *Padlock Publications*—*Edice Petlice*, with over 250 titles to date) and sitting in the interrogation rooms at the notorious STB (Secret Police, a Czech equivalent of the KGB) headquarters on Bartolomějská Street, answering questions about these books. The present volume is a spiritual history of those dreadful and glorious 20 years, captured in the specifically European, and even more specifically Czech, genre of the feuilleton: a mixture of stories, comments, and philosophical-political ruminations, elegantly held together by the personality of the feuilletonist.

The range of these feuilletons, as be-hooves the genre, is large. Some, such as "Coffee-House Culture," are virtually apolitical, merely charming, and for the American reader of special interest: it sheds light on the mystique of the Central European café—a phenomenon practically unknown in America, and quite different from the cafés of Paris—where so many works of art were conceived, discussed, and shaped. Other feuilletons give the reader an insight into the underbelly of Communist power structure that is rarely discussed because little is known about it. I call it the Gray Zone of totalitarian dictatorships; Vaculík does not use the term but illustrates it in striking examples:

It was I think some time in 1970 that a young man of my acquaintance came to see me, saying that in these difficult times

when there was no organized opposition everyone had to choose their own tactics. As far as he was concerned, he had decided to sacrifice his good name and join the Party; he will then be able to build up some kind of a position and save the work of his friends and colleagues who, it seemed, were all going to be fired, leaving the field to weaklings and incompetents interested only in promotion. He had come to tell me about it as he could not bear to keep it to himself. I replied I thought it was possible to do what he was thinking of doing but that it was dangerous and only the final outcome would tell. . . . To cut a long story short, let me tell you that the experiment is still in progress. . . . One day we are bound to find out the result.

All this is, at least to a degree, tongue-in-cheek. But Vaculík offers a hypothesis about at least some of the results of this kind of infiltration. For example, after Dubček's fall in the spring of 1969, the fate of his heavily "compromised" adherents such as Vaculík was still in the evil stars. Yet eventually they were spared the fate of Imre Nagy's anonymous followers. How did this miracle come about? Vaculík offers the following explanation:

I frequently wonder how it is possible that this entire collapse, this national disaster, started with several seemingly decent, from a political point of view understandable and voluntary, resignations. And then the sewers down below opened. However, there can be no doubt that whatever has been done that is good, has been done by those who were able to take a hand, and who had managed to hang on to the remnants of their integrity. . . . Above all I ask myself how come we had not been liquidated or exiled to some faraway places. That, too, was somebody's doing. Undoubtedly they must have discussed it. At that time our fate depended on how well they had grasped their mission.

Vaculík's pieces capture the spectacle of totalitarian absurdities. One day the writer briefly succumbs to the hypnotic spell of updated Goebbelsian propaganda art, before returning to his senses. He switches on his TV and an incredible sight appears: President Gustav Husák, who never mingles with crowds (except the "crowds" at Party congresses who have special invitations), is walking down Na příkopě Boulevard "remarkably unguarded and uncovered, like someone who is popular." He strolls "under the lindens looking up at the windows from which only friendly faces beamed down at him." He even stops and, "doing a better job

than an American film star, chatted to the people. I was conscious of a rare sensation, welling up from inside me, a feeling not far removed from that which says that socialism might be possible in this country after all." Then the spell is broken: the writer realizes that "what our TV showed was a 20-minute play about a republican, democratic government. It was excellently directed so that I too was fooled at first."

One of Vaculík's most penetrating pieces, "Words . . .," is a desperate text, written in a moment of utter depression:

When I was more naive, stronger, healthier, and purer I truly thought that all one had to do was to find the right word, the word that would contain the truth, act as a challenge, forge a weapon. I was to discover . . . that the word remains but a word unless you have the weapon to back it up. And so, what is the use of still more words without weapons? And what use would even weapons be against overwhelming odds? Suicide by a foreign hand?

A Cup of Coffee with My Interrogator is a good example of those inconspicuous, understated books on life, politics, justice, and humanity of which the Czechs are perhaps not the lousiest of authors.

JOSEF ŠKVORECKÝ

Josef Škvorecký is the author of *Dvořák in Love* (Knopf).

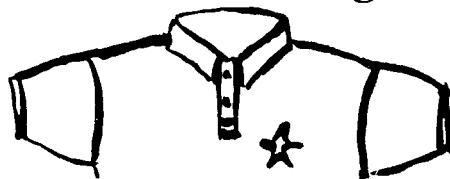
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NO OTHER WORDS

In Other Words by May Swenson

(Knopf, 128 pp., \$16.95)

May Swenson's new book—her first since *New and Selected Things Taking Place* some nine years ago—is a welcome addition to a paradoxical oeuvre. Few writers who on occasion strongly remind us of others have created so fully recognizable and inimitable a world. A playful spirit for whom writing is a (very exacting) game—as even the titles of *Poems to Solve* and *More Poems to Solve* suggest—she has in her typographical and syntactical ingenuity recalled, and often surpassed, e.e. cummings. Her penchant for scientific subjects, and her scientist's patience for documentation, evoke Marianne Moore and W. H. Auden. More surprisingly, this very modern poet who exuberantly breaks lines, and rules, in unexpected places takes one back to the 17th century—to the far sterner-minded George Herbert—to find another poet so dedicated to fashioning the right form for the fresh occasion each poem presents.

The poet whose presence we most sense behind the shoulder of *In Other Words*, however, is Swenson's friend, the late Elizabeth Bishop. The first poem, "In Florida," immediately—and deliberately, one assumes—draws one back to the lushness and lists of Bishop's "Florida." (Bishop catalogs seashells; Swenson, flowers.) In the elegiac "In the Bodies of Words," Swenson walks a beach—a favorite Bishop setting—and meets the bird of Bishop's "Sandpiper" reincarnated, as it were: "your pipers, Elizabeth!" If Swenson's "Waterbird" (perhaps an oblique homage to Bishop's waterbirds), too, shows how much these two poets shared—a keen visual perception, particularly of the natural world; a passion for the exotic; a capacity for self-effacement—it also points to some ingrained differences.

Few readers would dispute Bishop's ultimate superiority: with an unassuming dexterity similar to Swenson's, she achieved a much wider and darker range of feeling, often in a single poem. Yet credit must go where it is due. Bishop, whose ear was as fine-tuned as Swenson's, but who shied from superfluity, would probably not have rhymed "otter" with "water" twice in an 18-line

poem, as Swenson does successfully here. Indeed, the word "water" actually appears as an end word three times, and the repetitive effect is heightened by internal rhymes: "her cry, / a slatted clatter . . ." Swenson—like the poet she frequently resembles more than she does Bishop, Gerard Manley Hopkins—combines a fine sense of musical proportion with a conviction that excess can sometimes only be justified by further excess. If this high-spirited musical density, in which melody is written not in single notes but in chords, robs Swenson of the "naturalness" of tone Bishop so skillfully cultivated, one can only observe that Swenson rarely wishes to cultivate the natural. By the time "Waterbird" ends, we are entirely hers, entrapped in a net of aural cross-references:

She flaps up to dry on the crooked, look-dead limb of the Gumbo Limbo, her tan-tipped wing fans spread, tail a shut fan dangled.

In Other Words offers scores of equally felicitous word couplings and triplings. Repetition means not monotony but enhancement, as in "a white pontoon plane / putt-putts, puts down / into choppy furrows / of the bay" or "My clever Cockatoo, too, had a parrot's / longevity." The neat classifications of assonance, consonance, rhyme, and off-rhyme blur into virtual uselessness; often in a single instance, Swenson conflates three or four of them. Take, for instance, the finale of another poem (whose title is a sonic illustration of what's to come), "Goodbye, Goldeneye":

And goodbye, oh faithful pair of swans that used to glide—god and goddess shapes of purity—over the wide water.

Goodbye/glide/god/goddess are all cousins; but so are glide/wide and (cousins two lines removed) pair/purity. Note too how "glide" enacts its meaning on the current of the long dash that follows it. Often there exists no prosodic term for Swenson's conjoinings; undaunted by the poet's cliché that nothing rhymes with "orange," for example, she gives us something better than a rhyme in "the gecko's neck / of urgent orange." These too are bet-

ter than rhymes: "*Enormous / Anemone!* Look / in the *Anatomy* book . . ." (italics are mine).

Because Swenson's poems are so beautiful to listen to, one is continually surprised, and relieved, that they are rarely "pretty." Some of them, like "Birthday Bush," lament the ravages of time with a single brutal word: "I sweep away a trash / of crimson petals." Or, in "Alternate Side Suspended," a pristine snowfall is, in the end, satisfyingly fouled: "the street / steaming as usual under a urine-yellow sun." In "Summer-fall," where a gracious old hotel is being demolished, a "sick acrylic sunset" finishes things off. Even the most admiring reader, however, might reasonably wish that a poet of Swenson's enviable powers would apply them to loftier or deeper subjects than she customarily chooses. There are slight poems here about a blood test, about a houseful of bear rugs and teddy bears, even about the quality of the wrapping string on a package. Such poems, despite the pleasure individual lines afford, sit uncomfortably beside a small lyric that enlarges the spirit such as "Waterbird."

And yet whenever Swenson turns her hand to more "ambitious" poems (or at least lengthier ones), the results suggest that she is, for better or worse, more the poet of the well-wrought phrase than of the well-developed idea. *In Other Words* extends the Swenson tradition of writing about astronomy and space travel—large subjects indeed—but I found myself more taken with her chanting in the brief "Comet Watch on Indian Key" ("Halley's Comet . . . Comet / coming. Coming again") than with the extensive, reportorial, five-part "Shuttles," which ends with the disastrous launch of the Challenger. Written on the occasion of five shuttle launches from 1981 to 1986 (there were actually six, but "I missed the third," she admits engagingly), the poem seems less shaped than accreted; while one shudders at the final line ("They were alive. They knew."—her italics), one's discomfort may well result more from recollections of the event than from this retelling.

Another long poem, "Some Quadrangles," written for the 1982 Phi Beta Kappa exercises at Harvard, falls flat when it attempts moral uplift ("Stand alone. / Take a breath of your own. Choose the wide-angle / view") but offers, much more appealingly, some memorable word clusters: "Yamahs hadn't happened . . ." And the longest, concluding poem,

"Banyan," a bizarre and imaginative speculation on the newspaper story of a cockatoo that disappeared from its cage and then, apparently, locked itself up again, is richer in manner ("this necromancer/proliferating like a cancer") than in matter ("The purpose of life is / To find the purpose of life").

Ambition is large but does not necessarily, in a poet, take long to prove. Swenson sometimes best demonstrates her ambition and accomplishment in poems that are not only short but light. A section modestly called "Comics" contains some of the finest work in the book: the Lewis Carroll-esque "A Nosty Fright" (meaning "A Frosty Night," with implications of "a nasty fright") composed almost entirely of spoonerisms; or "The Gay Life," a reflection on parent-child love and the childish roles adults in love play, which instructs as it skillfully confuses; or "Summer's Bounty," a cornucopia of words whose components have been severed and transposed so that one can no longer take the wholes for granted ("apples of Pine," "rooms of mush").

We have too few comic poets. Swenson provides comedy in two senses: marrying her words off in one happy ending after another, she makes us laugh as she does so. But whether she writes in jest or in earnest, she belongs to that rare company of poets who convert the arbitrary correspondences among the sounds of words into what seems a pre-existing order. *In Other Words* confirms that there are no words other than her own, exactly, for what the language discovers in May Swenson, or for what she gives back to it.

MARY JO SALTER

Mary Jo Salter is the author of a book of poems, *Henry Purcell in Japan* (Knopf), and teaches at Mount Holyoke College.

CORRESPONDENCE, from page 2

speech: "The long struggle of minority citizens for equal rights, once a source of disunity and civil war, is now a point of pride for all Americans. We must never go back. There is no room for racism, anti-Semitism, or other forms of ethnic and racial hatred in this country." The cause of freedom at home and abroad is one, the president correctly argued. The failure clearly to establish the GOP as

the party of freedom is the basis of the administration's problems with blacks.

This administration has supported the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with record-high budgets and budget increases. But the Democratic Congress has once again pared back the administration's request for this year, from \$193 million to \$179 million. Enforcement of employment discrimination laws will suffer. Here's a civil rights issue for 1988, for those who care to raise it.

CLARENCE THOMAS

Chairman,

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Fred Barnes provides us with a laundry list of misdirection: Reagan against busing; Reagan against stiff economic sanctions against South Africa; Reagan against Martin Luther King's birthday as a national holiday, then grudgingly for it; Reagan against the Voting Rights Act of 1981; Reagan for tax deductions for segregated schools. Yet Barnes informs us, in his conclusion, that Reagan is not a racist. If you talk like a racist, curry favor with racists, endorse racist policies, then you are, by God, a racist! All of Reagan's smiling evasions can't wipe out eight years of carefully calculated racist drivel.

RAY ROBINSON

New York, New York

TUNE THAT NAME

To the editors:

In these days of presidential campaign coverage overkill, one important historical trend has been overlooked. With only two exceptions, every elected president since Woodrow Wilson had a name that in its most common usage (first and last) contained exactly four syllables. The four-syllable rule has implications for the 1988 race. Jesse Jackson and Richard Gephardt can rest easy. Michael Dukakis ought to insist that he be referred to as "Mike." Paul Simon and Albert Gore may as well drop out now. And Gary Hart can add to his list of regrettable past transgressions the shortening of "Hartpence." As for the GOP, Haig, Bush, and Kemp should throw in the towel. "Pete" Du Pont will, like Hart, regret his name change. Only (God help us) Pat Robertson fits the bill.

BRIAN P. GOLDSTEIN

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Bad Advice

WE HAD AN office pool here at TNR before the Iowa caucuses, sponsored by our reporter-researchers. Along with the usual weighty questions, they cheekily asked us to predict the post-Iowa conventional wisdom. (These kids have gotten jaded alarmingly quickly—they've been in Washington barely half a year.) The cynics around here, young and not so young, didn't come close to matching my favorite pronouncement—in, surprise, a *New York Times* editorial: "Signs of shallowness ran through the whole campaign. No blame attaches to the 13 candidates."

ONE NEW SIGN of shallowness—I'm not blaming anybody—is the prominence of the campaign fashion consultant. (See Philip Weiss's "Some Interest Around The Neck," p. 19.) The advice of the moment is clearly to dress down. The new "hot" Gephardt image was given a big boost in Iowa by the shift from ordinary overcoat to brightly colored parka and farm feed cap. Gore likes to appear in sweatpants whenever possible, and lately Bush desperately tried a quick makeover. In New Hampshire he started favoring parkas; then he showed up at a lumberyard wearing a farm-feed-style cap of his own. Dole too has worried about sartorial dissonance. After all of his "I'm one of you" rhetoric, he was caught up short when someone casually inquired about his fur-collared overcoat. Quick as a wink, the coat went into mothballs for the rest of the campaign. My pre-Super Tuesday prediction: tasseled loafers will be nowhere in sight.

FOR THOSE who can't afford consultants, thank heavens for how-to books. I'm stunned at the number each time the publishers' catalogs arrive. Among the hardest perennials of the how-to industry are step-by-step guides to public speaking for everybody who can't hope to have the likes of Roger Ailes, Bush's debate coach, at his or her side. There are hundreds of manuals, and new ones are published every year. (This spring you can in fact have Roger Ailes's advice, in *You are the Message: Secrets of the Master Communicators*. Apparently the communication consultant needed to consult himself; it's written "with Jon Kraushar.") Or you can try *Powerspeak*, or slightly less

intimidating, *I Never Know What to Say*, or depending on your needs and audience, *Speaking in Tongues*. Lillian Glass, Ph.D., promises to transform your "vocal image" in *Talk to Win*, which features photographs of her prize students doing breathing and enunciation exercises. Her star is Dolph Lundgren of *Rocky IV*—the blond hunk who played the Soviet boxer, and barely uttered a word (his pecs dwarfed his powers of articulation). The depressing assumption of all of these books is precisely what they tout as inspiring: that even though public speaking ranks next to dental visits on the anxiety scale, everybody can learn not only to do it but to love it—and what's more, that it's a crucial life skill in our loquacious culture. Part of the price of all this talk is obvious: think of how much GNP is sacrificed to gab. But there may be a subtler cost as well. A decade ago, in an essay called "The Distribution of Discourse," George Steiner suggested that there is a shifting equilibrium in any given culture between "internal" and "external" speech—that the more we say out loud, the more we drown out the silent conversation we carry on with ourselves. To put it bluntly, the more we talk, the less we think.

ASIDE FROM cookbooks (my favorites this year: *The Brilliant Bean*, *The Pesto Manifesto*, and best of all, *Barbeque'n With Bobby* by Bobby Seale—"Righteous, down-home barbeque tips, hints and recipes perfected over thirty years of testing and tasting. A treat for the slightly older activist."), the other great how-to staple is advice about childrearing. The big theme is building confidence in kids, but the crowd of books betrays the far bigger problem, insecurity in their parents: *The Self-Confident Child*, *Creating a Good Self-Image in Your Child*, *Teaching Your Child to Handle Peer Pressure*, *Teaching Your Child Basic Body Confidence*, *The Sports Confident Child*, *How To Be a Good Role Model for Your Child*. I admit, these sound better than the pushy books: *Developing Talent in Young People*, or more ominous, *Loving Your Child Is Not Enough*, or for the AIDS era, *Superimmunity for Kids*. After this discouraging array, plus *Fat-Proofing Your Children*, it was a relief to find a book called *Joyful Child*—until I saw its subtitle, *New Age Activities to Enhance Children's*

Joy. I was shocked when I came upon *How to Shoot Your Children*—the most desperate advice of all. Then I noticed the rest of the title on the next line, *On Home Video*.

THE WORST consultants, parents and politicians should know, are children. Of course, it's de rigueur for every candidate to say in his announcement speech that his decision to run is the result of loving deliberation around the family hearth, gathering the wisdom not only of his wife but of his kids, the future of America. But you rarely believe it, and when you do, watch out. When Gary Hart let on that his re-entry into the race was inspired by Andrea's and John's disappointment over his withdrawal, it sounded frighteningly like the real thing: his decision seemed a part not so much of politics as of family therapy. The children were taking charge, without any how-to guides—no *Creating a Good Self-Image in Your Parent*, *The Self-Confident Parent*, or *Teaching Your Parent to Handle Peer Pressure*. I've just learned that the gap may soon be filled. According to Eleanor Mondale's wedding announcement in the *New York Times*, she's on leave from her job as a disk jockey to work on a book—about the children of presidents and other politicians. But too late to help Andrea and John, who can expect to catch hell from Dad when his campaign finally collapses.

DESPITE the TV hype and Leni Riefenstahl pageantry, the winter Olympics are always a great respite from presidential primary madness. This year the games are especially refreshing, for even the Olympics can't shake the Canadians' uncompetitive, unself-confident spirit. In Calgary there were few signs of jingoistic pre-game frenzy among the natives. The Canadians don't go in for grueling training: "We don't push ourselves very much," says a sports historian. They don't greedily set their sights on the gold: "If we expect too much, we'll be disappointed." When it's all over, the *Calgary Times* will doubtless editorialize: "Signs of shallowness ran through the whole competition. No blame attaches to the athletes."

A.H.

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Richard Grassgreen,
President of Kinder-Care, and the children.

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